BING

No 68
JUNE
1983

THE
INTERNATIONAL
CROSBY CIRCLE

Edited by REG BRISTO

"Gary never wrote that book. It was written by someone with a keen sense for money. I've told my kids to write their books before I pass on so I can check them out. George Burns has the best idea - he isn't going!"

BOB HOPE, speaking on ITN News 20th May last on his 80th birthday.

A marvel

ISN'T Bing Crosby marvellous?

At 73 he is enthralling audiences as much as ever he did 40 years ago.

One critic says that Bing is obviously enjoying himself and wants the people watching him to enjoy themselves too.

What a contrast that is to the present-day crop of so-called entertainers who give the impression that they are in the final stages of an unmentionable, painful disease.

In 40 years' time, will they still be around? Won't it be dreadful if they are?

STRAIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE...

It went straight down the middle
And I was great down the middle
Yes it went straight down the middle today

Bing's favourite golfing song kind permission Chappell-Morris Ltd.

. . . and so far as the millions were concerned, straight down the middle was the direction Crosby always took: the lovable warbler who was the hunting, shooting, fishing he-man, the racehorse owner, the charity golfer, the celebrity who so often had gone fishing, the all-American family man and prolific if incongruously Victorian father. Crosby also blazed the talkie trail for singers who wanted to act and was the first singer to win an Oscar.

On celluloid he courted some of the most glamorous women of the age, from Marion Davies and Carole Lombard to Joan Caulfield and Grace Kelly. In the 'Road' pictures it was always Crosby who ended up with Lamour: it was she who once ad-libbed on the theme of the great success of the Hope-Crosby double act, 'There's always a click when two heels meet'. Crosby, who began his career as a hard-drinking consumer of bootleg liquor with the Paul Whiteman band, ended it by becoming the greatest proselytiser on behalf of Christmas since Charles Dickens; his recording of Irving Berlin's 'White Christmas' has passed the 40 million sales mark and is still selling.

Crosby will always be honoured as the harbinger of modern times in the vocal arts. Just as Jolson is acknowledged as the last of the great vaudeville ranters, so Crosby's place is secure as the first of the great microphone singers, The Crooner par excellence.

No. 68

Organ of The International Crosby Circle.

BING

June, 1983

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Annual Subscription, bringing BING four times post paid, UK £2.50p European £3.00 sterling; American/Canadian 12 dollars airmail, 8 dollars surface mail; Australian their equivalent to £5.00 for airmail posting, £4.00 surface mail. Your subscription is due on receipt of this issue or shortly thereafter if a "X" appears: [ ]

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As you will read - as many of you KNOW!- the Waldorf Hotel event was a resounding, even spectacular success. Read all about it !

The appeal for donations towards the BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S plan to buy Bing's family home launched in the March issue has not. So far, the donations have been astonishingly few. And they were by:

Albert Harvey, Brentwood; Dennis Saville, Thamesmead; Ken Brown, Pinner: Arthur Holmes, Edgware; Keith Richmond, Pulborough, Pat Forster, Midhurst; Dave Smith, Newcastle, and Tony Trimble, Manchester.

However, its not what it seems. Some explanation is required. Firstly, we have learned that many members of the BCHS have made donations DIRECT to the Society in America. Fair enough,they are not expected to donate TWICE! Secondly, it seems a spontaneous collection was made at the Waldorf presumably in honour of the visit of Ken Twiss. This resulted in a substantial sum which will not, of course, appear in our account. Once again, fair enough.

Thirdly, we want to make it clear - times are hard and there are many demands on cash - that this house-purchase envisaged is a LONG-TERM project - see previous issue. It follows that donations may be made at any time, even perhaps up to two years hence. It is hope members will bear this in mind and rally to the cause as and when it is possible. Already the British response has surprised and delighted our friends in the States. Donations, no matter how small - or large! - should be sent to MRS. JEAN BIGNELL, 21 ST. ANDREWS CLOSE, WEMBLEY, MIDD'X, HA0 2QB made out to B.C.H.S. A/C

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EDITORIAL

All who admired and respected Bing Crosby - and that means millions of people all over the world, not just those that take an interest in affairs Crosby by reading this magazine, have undergone what can only be described as a grievous experience. That admiration and respect has lasted for anything up to, aye and beyond, 50 years. Years during which Bing was universally regarded as not only a great and unique - because of that voice - artist but also as a man of great integrity; a fine man by any standards. But, the unbelievable, the unthinkable, happened - and safely dead, Bing has been bitterly assailed. By his eldest son. You will see our reaction, though we would have preferred to ignore the whole unhappy episode, in the article headed HONOUR THY FATHER.

By an extraordinary coincidence, we have been told Gary should listen, if he hasn't, to Bing's poignant lesson originating here in Britain on the STARS ON SUNDAY TV programme - JUDGE NOT. This lesson sounds even more poignant in the light of events - almost as if Bing knew, even as he spoke the sombre words in that so-rich, vibrant, voice that there may be those who would be casting stones, casting doubts...soon after he left us. But he could not have imagined it would be his son....

We have declared elsewhere that Bing needs defending from NOBODY. It would be an impertinence. The book, written of course by one Ross Firestone mainly, has had a total boomerang effect. Whatever career or credibility Gary had seems to have gone.

Yet, we feel we must mention some comments by Bing's youngest brother Bob in an interview with Bob Lundberg of the BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY. Actually, the interview was about Bob's career but, inevitably perhaps, Bing came into it. Bob declared roundly that Bing was a fine man, a great brother, splendid parent - and if there were any doubts speak to the people Bing had played with in all spheres of entertainment. The number of people, one-time colleagues, Bing 'had taken care of' was endless and would never be known simply because Bing always stipulated such things remained personal and confidential. The same applied to the vast charity-donations Bing was always making. Bob revealed that soon after following in Bing's footsteps and leaving home to sing with Anson Weeks's band (purely on his name!) he got stranded - and it was 15 years before he discovered that the thousand dollars he suddenly received, ostensibly from an interested booker, came in fact from Bing. In lighter vein, Bob revealed that to sing with Anson he asked for (and got) a tuxedo from Bing!

In not so light vein, however, brother Bob said that soon after Bing's death he received a big offer to write a book on Bing - especially if he "could reveal some naughty bits..." Bob's answer was he felt no inclination to write a book on Bing, naughty or otherwise - the former not even being possible. But it shows the blandishments modern-day publishers will offer for sensational garbage.

Bob Crosby found it easy to resist. Gary did not.....

HONOUR THY FATHER

EXODUS: CH2C: V12

Poor Gary Crosby...yes, in spite of the anguish, the indignation, the anger he has caused with his posthumous defamation of his illustrious father, the main feeling he has engendered in us is pity. Poor Gary - to use the modern parlance: He blew it all....

It had long been 'splashed' in the press that Bing's eldest son, named after the illustrious Gary Cooper, was planning to "reveal the truth" about the man the world loved, admired, and respected all through his remarkable career - a career during which without any doubt Bing became the personification of a man who was not only a brilliant artist, the possessor of a truly unique voice, an almost equally brilliant sportsman, raconteur, conversationalist philosopher even, but fundamentally a great gentleman who lived by principles heavily underlined by religion. Against this, Gary raised his pitiful voice, or his ghosted pen, to revile the character that is, in truth, unassailable.

Not quite alone for we did have the experience of 'literary' scavengers who endeavoured to follow a similar path....who did manage to coerce people to say, hesitantly: "Well...yes...Bing was aloof..." or "Bing was difficult to understand....". or "I was never, I felt, a friend of Bing's...." And so on. THE HOLLOW MAN got the reception it merited. As ua Gary's venomous "revelations".

Those 'revelations', whi almost certainly grossly exaggerated, really told nothing new. For those who cared, it was plain that almost throughout his life Bing was a sorely troubled man. This emerged time and time again over the years in interviews and in articles. The reason? He was sorely troubled by what he considered his 'failure' with his four sons by his first marriage. He pulled no punches on this subject in the otherwise light-hearted book CALL ME LUCKY: viz:

> ".....sooner or later a fellow has to accept the restrictions of maturity, and he might as well start when he's a college freshman. A good way to begin is to realise that nobody's going to take him by the ear and make him study.
>
> I didn't know how serious Gary's situation was until I heard him telling one of his pals how easy it was at Stanford; nobody cared whether you went to class or not, and everything was a cinch. That wasn't what I'd heard about Stanford. I began to worry, and after he went back to Palo Alto, I took a weekend off

and went up to talk to his professors - particularly to the Dean of Men - to find out what was going on.

When I asked the Dean how Gary was doing, he said, 'You won't have to worry about him, because he won't be here after Christmas.'

'Where'll he be?' I asked.

'I don't know,' the Dean said, 'but he won't be here.'

then My situation as a father is maybe a bit more complicated than that which faces most dads. Raising the sons of a movie star presents special problems. When the children of people prominent in show business go to school or to entertainments, or to parties, the solid, well-grounded kids they meet at those places pay them no special attention, but there's always a bunch of bubble-heads who make a fuss over a boy whose father or mother's name is known in the entertainment world. 'With all the money your old man's got, you'll never have to work,' they tell him. Or, 'You mean you've got only one car?' and they ladle out the old goo. If the kid who gets this treatment is a little susceptible - as some of mine are -such guff can spoil them.....Dixie and I were never very anxious to get our boys too deeply enmeshed in show business. Dixie insisted they get their education first.....

Some of my friends think I'm too tough a disciplinarian with my sons.....I've had some bitter arguments with my sons.....not everyone else at Hayden - meaning parents - went along with my kind of regulation....my sons tell me I am considered the big bad wolf at Hayden Lake; that the other kids run when I come around and that I'm supposed to be a tough jailer.

This has put me squarely in the middle. There have been times when I couldn't tell whether I was Captain Bligh in a Hawaiian sportshort or the cream puff of the world, for Dixie used to tell me that I was too lax, that I wasn't strict enough and that I forgot the boys' transgressions too soon. She used to reproach me with 'You punish them; then ten minutes later you're taking them to a movie. That's bad. You should let the memory of their punishment linger so they'll remember it.'

Lax or not, I'll bet they remember the spankings they got when they were younger. I laid in a big leather belt similar to he one I'd backed up to at Gonzaga in the hand of Father Sharp - and when they did something particularly outrageous - for example, going into Dixie's room, taking her canary out of its cage and giving it what they called a 'summer-suit' by plucking its feathers...I summer-suited them.....

It's not easy. It makes me feel like a heel to be jumping them out all the time, and the endless pleading, the coaxing and bawling out grow tiresome. I've had so many heart-to-heart talks with Gary I'm embarrassed when I say

'Sit down, Gary. I want to have a few words with you.' I feel hammy and I'm beginning to fear that my 'sage counsel' is only arousing apathy...I'don't claim I'm any prize as a parent.... Dixie tried, too. Maybe we've had the wrong approach, but we've done the best we could....'

Poor Bing; a troubled man over those four sons. Thus he wrote in his book, in his own words. As we remarked: nothing new by Gary - except perhaps the gross exaggeration.

"We've done the best we could..." The despair in - as we also remarked earlier - Bing's words is patent. How well-founded were his apprehensions. As perhaps he knew.

That there were pressures on those boys is undeniable. How could it be otherwise with their father one of the most prominent men in the world? With his name, and therefore theirs, constantly in the press, magazines, on the radio, on hit records....on the movie-screen....everywhere, in fact. No wonder Bing tried so hard to get them to believe in things other than show-business glamour, to overlay the tinsel-like environment of Hollywood with stern, family and religious beliefs and principles.

But if there were pressures, there were boundless benefits.... Gary in particular might, to use the modern jargon, be said to be a lad with everything going for him. Opportunities for a first-class education (seemingly scorned); a wealthy, comfortable home with caring parents - caring despite the spankings which surely were richly earned? Permitted to make records at an early age with his illustrious dad; allowed to deputise for his father on his radio show when Bing vacationed (to the chagrin and perhaps understandable annoyance of other, more established, artists); the OPEN SESAME to show business and its glittering personalities. More than that, as has been pointed out here before, he was at least one that had pretensions to a 'Crosby' voice and personality.

And he blew it all.....

One or two newspapers saw fit to catalogue the history of the four boys - divorce, extra-marital problems, alcoholics anonymous, drunk-driving, fighting among themselves - Gary forsooth, added fighting with his brothers to his other 'credentials'.

One might fairly ask if any of them is entitled to pass judgement on anyone, least of all their Father who, it will readily be appreciated, had none of those peccadiloes debited to him - except for that solitary Prohibition-Whiteman era lapse.

Least of all their illustrious Father; greeted by Royalty, Presidents, Bishops, the Pope, ambassadors...to the humblest admirer who grabbed his hand on a golf-course and blurted: "Thanks Bing!" Truly, its enough to make us weep, for the truth is Bing greeted those humblest fans with the same bonhomie he afforded all those glittering and prestigious personalities who were so happy to meet him.

The singing-act which the four boys formed and which seemed to promising - and of which Bing was so proud - broke up in bitter wrangling and recrimination.

Phil Harris, perhaps closes to Bing of all, said poignantly:

"I loved those boys dearly, but I never knew one of them work."

A crushing indictment, surely.

As many people have said publicly, notably Frank Bough of BBC-TV who was so charmed when he entertained Bing on the sporting Grandstand programme, and then again in the wings of the Palladium stage: "Bing is not here to answer those charges..." This patent fact has been lost upon no one who has read even extracts of Gary's venomous diatribe. Venomous - yet at the same time and in a strange way, pitiful. Is Gary venomous because he "blew it all"?

The newspaper which serialised Gary's book subsequently stated it was presenting "the defence of Bing Crosby". Truly a fatuous claim; Bing never needed defending by ANYONE. They were, of course, referring to Kathryn Crosby's book, published almost simultaneously with Gary's. A sincere enough book, in all probability, but dealing with an entirely different, a much later, slice of Bing's monumental career, and therefore, in that context irrelevant.

It need hardly be said, we hope, that these words are truly penned in sorrow than in any kind of anger; trite as that may sound, it remains true. We would have preferred indeed to have ignored the whole unhappy business of filial 'treason' to Bing. So many members have expressed their varying moods of anger, dismay, indignation and even almost total disarray it was considered that the 'ostrich-like' stance could not be permitted. And we should make it abundantly clear that we don't rate Bing, nor any other mortal, as a saint - but certainly as a first-rate human being and a wonderful artist. And certainly a man of rectitude who deserved better from his first-born son.

It might be added that we have known people who were harshly treated by their parents. Very few but of course it happens. And we always found them reluctant to talk about it, to criticise, to look back; rather, on any good aspects they could. They certainly never dreamed of proclaiming it to the world - with glee. True, one of the other three boys has bitterly criticised Gary. To which Gary has retorted that as far as he is concerned that brother is dead. So far as we know Gary has not allowed his venom to forfeit the maintenance his father always provided and, of course, continues to provide.

As we contemplate the many happy photographs of those four cherubic boys, the film appearances, the radio efforts, the carol concerts, they carried out with Bing, always so redolent of true family happiness, we can only ponder on what went so very wrong?

But Gary. Poor Gary. He blew it all.

GOING MY WAY

BY

** KEITH PARKINSON **

In the previous issue of BING we presented a 1973 'look-back' on Bing's film, GOING MY WAY; this revealed the number of Oscars it won, that it was the first film on religion in 'popular' vein as opposed to the dramatic Biblical spectaculars; Bing's Oscar for 'best Actor' and so on. Here Keith reveals further lesser-known information on this film which proved to be so popular and also a mammoth-money-maker'.

On the Monday evening following Bing's death, the BBC paid tribute by showing GOING MY WAY in the 9.25 movie slot. The choice was apt in that it combined the qualities which typified a Crosby movie: good story, good songs, and good acting. A critique of the film would be put in the shade by James Agee's writings on GOING MY WAY. He said it all better than any of his contemporaries. He had the unique job of being film critic for 'The Nation' and 'Time' simultaneously. I make no excuses for quoting at length from Agee's reviews.

"A rather saccharine story about priests, it has a gentle, engaging performance by Bing Crosby, a very full and fine one by Barry Fitsgerald, and a general leisure and appreciation of character which I think highly of. It would have a little more stature as a 'religious' film if it dared suggest that evil is anything worse than a bad cold."

(The Nation, 13 May 1944)

GOING MY WAY goes the way of tons of Hollywood flesh this season: it is a religious picture. It is also one of the year's top surprises. It presents Bing Crosby as a Catholic priest, and gets away with it so gracefully that Crosby, the priesthood, and the audience are equal gainers. It points the way to the great films which will be possible when Hollywood becomes aware of the richness and delight of human character observed for its own sake. Father O'Malley might have been one of those brisk, bland, up-and-comers who have made an impure science of 'not acting like a priest at all'. Instead he is subtle, gay, debonair - a wise young priest whose arresting resemblance to Bing Crosby never obscures his essential power. GOING MY WAY is a sort of friendly contest between two diametically different kinds of acting: Fitzgerald's the immensely experienced, stagewise sort which leaves mere virtuosity miles behind. And Crosby's which is hardly acting at all but merely an unaffected exploitation of an amiable personality. The picture shows that neither kind, at its best, can possibly be beat, and that to-

gether they bring just about the last word in teamwork. It will surprise nobody who sees Crosby's performance and the breadth of his control over the film as a whole that he has just signed a ten-year contract with Paramount and is preparing - on the side - to make his debut as a producer (first picture: THE GREAT JOHN L.) Even so, the picture is not his; it is Fitzgerald's.

(Time, 1 May 1944)

Irrespective of where the acting merit lay, Barry Fitzgerald received a fee of 12,500 dollars and the total Paramount budget of around one million dollars was broken down into 650,000 dollars for filming costs and 350,0000 studio overheads charged against production.

> A scene shot for the film and never used involved the character played by Porter Hall - Mr. Belknap - walking alongside Bing. Hall is busily proclaiming his atheism. The camera is following them at walking speed, recording Bing listening attentively and looking straight ahead. Suddenly, Porter Hall disappears, simply dropping out of sight. Then the camera pulls back to show Bing assuming he is still walking with Hall but revesling to the audience an open man-hole cover in the street. The sequence was vetoed because Leo McCarey, the film's director, thought it would throw the balance of the film because it was so funny.

Paramounts head of West Coast Production in 1944 was Y. Frank Freeman, a bigotted man who disliked Catholics, Jews and negroes. Hollywood writer Maurice Zolotow records that when Freeman had seen a preview of GOING MY WAY he stated 'Nobody will go to see this picture except Catholics in church basements.' Freeman also objected to the scene in which Risë Stevens sings the AVE MARIA surrounded by a group of children, one of whom was a nine-year-old black boy.

GOING MY WAY ran for ten weeks at the Paramount Cinema in New York, where it broke house records. It played to 1,010,000 people and grossed 847,000 dollars. It broke the previous record of 802,000 dollars for a run of a similar length by LADY IN THE DARK. On its initial release the film took ten million dollars, seven million being for showings in the USA and Canada. A subsequent release in 1950 brought Paramount a further ten million dollars.

Bing's Oscar-acceptance speech made when he received the best actor award for 1944 was one of the shortest on record at the Academy Award ceremony. 'This is not only the first time I've been selected the best actor - its one of the few occasions I've been called an actor.'

Ingrid Bergman, who was midway thro' filming THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S with Bing and director McCarey, also received an Oscar as the best actress of 1944 for her part in GASLIGHT. Bing and McCarey had already received their awards when Miss Bergman collected hers and made the following speech:

> 'I am deeply grateful for this award. I am particularly glad to get it this time because I'm working on a picture at the moment with Mr. Crosby and Mr. McCarey, and I'm afraid if I went on the set tomorrow without an award, neither of them would speak to me.'

In addition to the Academy awards which the film won it received the following honours:

(a) New York Film Critics Awards (1944) for the best motion picture; best actor(Barry Fitzgerald) and best direction (Leo McCarey).
(b) National Board of Review Awards (1944) for one of the ten best English language films of the year and Bing and Barry Fitzgerald in the list of best actor for their performances.
(c) Golden Globe Award as best motion picture (drama).
(d) 'New York Times' listing in its 1944 'Ten Best' list.
(e) 'Picturegoer' Gold Medal Award, which went to Bing who was voted Best Actor of the Year for his performance in the film by the magazine's predominantly British readership.

GOING MY WAY (Cont.)

The latter award was in the form of the Ascot Gold Cup. The magazine presented the award to David Rose, who was then the head of Paramount in Great Britain. Rose found that David Niven was returning to the USA after his demob. from the armed forces and Niven acted as personal courier by delivering the cup to Bing. The film was in 'Variety's' list of the Top 25 money-making films of 1943-44.

Bing was, no doubt, at his cinematic popularity peak at the time of the film's release. For the first time ever he topped the annual box-office poll and he continued to head the Top Ten for the next four years.

ASHES, FIRE, FLOOD - AND A ROYAL VISIT

If the above heading was a cryptic clue in a crossword puzzle it wouldn't be too difficult for most to come up with the answer. It refers, of course, to Australia. We have seen quite a lot of the continent Down Under during the past winter and Spring, starting with the cricket Test Matches when England quite ingloriously lost the Ashes to the Aussies.

Next, Australia was on our screens again with the terrifying bush-fires that occurred as the result of the long drought - with the assistance of a few maniacs. They were followed by the equally terrifying floods - and finally by the tour of the Prince of Wales and Lady Diana. We seemed to have got a lot closer just at the time when a lot of Aussies are thinking of going Republican! Not that is a subject for our columns. It is quite irrelevant.

In the previous issue of BING we did mention our concern for ICC members (of whom none are keener than the Aussie mates) because of the bush-fires then raging in South Australia. It brought response in several letters, among them a most interesting and informative one from RON DANIELS of 1 Battye Avenue, Victor Harbor, South Australia, 5211. Ron wrote us as follows:

Hope you are all well and looking forward to a good summer. Our summer ended rather abruptly; on the first day of autumn the rains came and ever since it has been very very wet, and very cold. "Instant winter" you might say.

It is grimly ironic that if we could have lasted another week or two without a serious bush-fire the danger would have been over. Many of the people who suffered in the fires found themselves, two weeks later, facing flood water and severe storm damage. South Australia has a climate of extremes, depending on which way the wind is blowing! The temperature can drop 20° in as many minutes. Round Victor Harbor we have fairly open farm country so we are not unduly troubled by bush-fires - but we DO have to make sure everything is well tied down when the southerly gales start to blow; there's not much between us and Antarctica.

However, to turn to matters Bing, referring to JIM LEMON'S letter (p45 March BING) and the song MAYBE YOU'LL BE THERE, words by Sammy Gallop and music by Rube Bloom. In 1947 Gordon Jenkins and his Orchestra recorded this for Decca (USA), vocal by Charles le Vere and chorus. It was a million-seller and stayed in the then charts for 30 weeks.

It is not surprising, then, that Bing

sang this song a number of times on the Philco Radio Show, including the final one on 1st June, 1949.

About ten years later, Gordon Jenkins backed Frank Sinatra on one of his 'mood' albums (WHERE ARE YOU?) and one of the numbers was MAYBE YOU'LL BE THERE. Jim Lemon may have heard this, though it in no way sounds like the 30's Bing voice! I can find no reference, however, to this song being used in a film as Jim seems to think.

I am pleased to read that our Editor has joined the ranks of those who believe the 'real Crosby' is the pre-1937 performer (ATTACKING CROSBY, page 13) My own opinion is that the change coincided with Bing's changing over to John Scott Trotter's orchestra. While JST provided impeccable backing he did not drive Bing as his earlier orchestras did. The difference is very noticeable on the KMH shows which started with Jimmy Dorsey providing the musical content, it was in 1937 (Aug) that Trotter took over the direction.

It is well known that if Bing was given a good backing then he would give a good performance, but give him a bland, unobtrusive backing - a la Trotter - then we get a 'bland' Bing.

That he hankered to work with jazz-inspired musicians is obvious if one looks at the list of accompaniments in the 40's - Eddie Condon, Joe Venuti Jimmy Dorsey, Perry Botkin, Matty Matlock, Louis Armstrong, Jack Teagarden, and who can forget his rendering of IT HAD TO BE YOU accompanied by Red Nichols on the cornet? The enthusiasm and the artistry were still there - indeed, the artistry stayed right up to the Final Chapter - but by the 40's the range had gone, and Bing was the first to admit it, e.g. "that's my Brunswick key John, you'll have to come down a little..."

Perhaps we should consider ourselves fortunate that we have so many of those Brunswick performances now on LP and we can re-live the pleasure of hearing Bing attacking the song, and reaching for those high and low notes as he did in his hey-day.

And with that profound thought I will sign off for, probably, another twelve months!

Editor: We hope not Ron - write any any time you can for we like to hear the authentic story of life in Australia.

There's little to add, or even to disagree with too in what Ron has written. Perhaps I should correct his ill- or rather unfounded, belief that I am a convert to the "Bing best before 1937" school. I've always been a believer - ever since, in fact, I first heard PLEASE, HERE LIES LOVE, DINAH, SHINE and others of that calibre! As Editor, however, I do not seek to 'correct' or 'convert' those who are convinced that the 40's, 50's or even the 70's were Bing's hey-day! No sir.

We might also perhaps correct the impression Ron may have given that Bing had JST foisted upon him. Not so - Bing SENT for John when Dorsey indicated he wanted to concentrate his band on other work. And Bing sent for JST because he was so impressed with the arrangements JST had done - as a free-lance - for the songs in PENNIES FROM HEAVEN. And it may be of interest that John Scott did NOT immediately accept!

It may well be that JST's style inevitably had an effect on Bing's singing and style; but I remain convinced that other factors came into it, e.g. the years making him more 'mature', his status as an established star in many fields giving him a 'blander' approach and not so much the young, robust, band-singer desirous of "getting on". Its all quite fascinating to think - and write - about.

It might be borne in mind that Bing, had he been disssatisfied with JST, could have had almost anyone he wanted!

The information on MAYBE YOU'LL BE THERE is appreciated - and this song shouldn't be confused with MAYBE, the song we were enthusing about recently in DISCROSBY, and indeed, return to in that feature in this issue.

Referring to the Royal visit Down Under - some of the royal couples' encounters with the Maoris gave us the chance to hear if only briefly, the very melodious singing those people always provide. Personally, I'm very fond of it and have a couple of Maori choir albums and wish there were more available. And the most well-known of these melodies was, of course, an adapted NOW IS THE HOUR - a million-seller for Bing. But there are many, many other delightful songs.

SAD - AND GLAD

Grievously, we have more than the usual share of melancholy events to record; we have no wish to reopen possibly softening grief but it is proper we record them, and to express our sympathy with our sincere condolences.

Many will know dear Ena Hooley of Winchester as she visited Leeds many times and endeared herself to all. At Easter alas, her husband George passed away in particularly distressing circumstances. His health had not been good for some time but there was no indication of the final blow. George was not himself a member but always loyally supported Ena in her great interest in and admiration for Bing, and his passing was all the harder to bear for he and Ena had been busy preparing to move into long-awaited new accommodation

A letter from Mrs. Kathleen Mackin in early April told us that her husband, LES MACKIN of Blyth, Northumberland, also had died. Both Kathleen and Les were also well-known on account of joining us at Leeds. Touchingly, Kathleen wrote as follows:

> "Les got great comfort from all his Bing records and tapes when he could no longer get out in the last months....of course he always appreciated Bing. He had records he bought before we were married even and that was 40 years ago. In fact, we did our courting going to the pictures to see Bing...so, I have a lot to thank Bing for...."

Yet again, with the utmost regret, JIM HALMS of Finsbury Park, London has lost his wife to the dreaded scourge of cancer. Jim and his late wife had been busy, looking forward to the London event in May. Not unnaturally, Jim is sick at heart; and we are, too. Mrs. Halms had an operation about six years ago and all had seemed so well until quite recently.

To all these bereaved people our warmest thoughts in their task of readjusting to sadly changed circumstances. We wish them well.

On a totally different note, we must tell you that a lot of people hastened to tell us the whereabouts of Strelley! And we're grateful - especially to Frank Challenger who actually put us in touch with CLAUDE BISHOP - and Strelley is in Nottinghamshire! Reference to the previous issue of BING (pages 7 & 9) will show that Claude wrote a true-Crosby letter to the Nottingham Evening Post about WHITE CHRISTMAS, putting into perspective the true nature of Bing's famous Yuletide song which had, apparently, been criticised on irreligious grounds.

A charming couple of letters from Claude (Bishop now becomes an even more potent name in Crosbyana in the process!) proves he is indeed, as we were confident, a Bing-man of the highest calibre. And also as we thought, he was as unaware of us as we him until we had his letter to the press brought to our attention. Claude, obviously a live-wire in many directions in his home town, is now safely in the fold!

Overleaf, you will see one of those "Bing-thro'-the-ages" newspaper articles - of 1960 in fact. Bing came here regularly and frequently after his first-ever (wartime) visit. And always it attracted the media. Bing was in fine form - as always!

'OH MAN! I HATE WORK BUT I CAN'T RETIRE'

HAVING yawned his way into London with the sun yesterday from Los Angeles, Bing Crosby dropped into bed in a Claridge's suite and slept for five hours. Then he took a cab and went to order a handful of suits.

He asked for one dinner suit, two "tweedies" and a couple of very executive business outfits. "Oh, yes, they'll like this back home," he drawled. "They won't say 'pip-pip' or anything. But they'll like 'em."

Then, because Bing's 26-year-old wife Kathy has never been to London before, the Old Groaner took her on a quick cab ride round the number one spots.

At Buckingham Palace, a little boy spotted them and got Bing's autograph. At St. James's Palace the couple just craned out of the cab window.

Then they drove on to Westminster Abbey.

"We also dropped in on my old pal Jock Whitney, the U.S. ambassador, at the Embassy," said the oh-so-casual Crosby.

FLASHBACK TO 1935 IN BING'S HEYDAY

THIS was "The Groaner" as cinema fans saw him when he starred with Joan Bennett in the film "Two For Tonight" in 1935.

AN OLD FRIEND

"Didn't have no invitation or anything. Hell, didn't even have my passport with me. But they let me in. We went right on upstairs and into Jock's office.

"He's an old friend. We played polo together and went on the track together—years ago, of course.

"They didn't recognise me. Didn't even ask my name." And that's how this fabulous long-playing star of 56 really likes things.

He didn't want any fuss. He didn't want to talk at all really.

"I'm lethargic . . . you know, bone lazy. I never work hard. Oh, man no! I hate work. But I can't retire.

"I don't really know why I keep on going. I've been in the business 35 years and hell, I reckon its about time I got out.

"But there are a lot of other people involved. My recording outfit and my television team and my writers, and their families, too, of course.

"I don't know why, but they still seem to want me.

"I have four television shows a year, and the company reckons I still rate high. They have these polls and things, and they tell me I still get the figures.

"I make a picture now and again, but that's getting harder. I'm not that easy to fit in any more.

"I'm too old to get the girl and too young to play the grandpappy—although I am one in real life.

"Of course, the records are not what they were—for me that is.

"I don't rate with the teenagers, that's sure; but I'm still making records. Just finished an album with Louis Armstrong that's good. Think you'll like it.

AND A CLOSER LOOK AT THAT FACE

CROSBY today—the face of the man who crooned his way to the top.

NEW FILM

"Oh yes, round 'bout next July I'm gonna start making another 'Road' picture with my old pal Bob Hope. Gonna do it here, too. It's called 'Road to Hong Kong.'

Three of his sons by his first marriage—Dennis, Phillip and Lindsay—are working a night club act together. "They're great, believe me," said Bing.

While he is in Rome during the next fortnight for the Olympics, Bing is going to fit in some golf. And he will have an audience with the Pope.

Last night Bing and Kathy saw "Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be" at the Garrick Theatre.

BING THRO' THE AGES

If all the stories, articles, reviews concerning Bing Crosby were brought together (an impossible task of course) they would comprise a formidable tome. Considering they would span almost sixty years (and, naturally, they are still appearing - don't we know it!) as some album sleeve notes would have it: "There's nothing new to say about Crosby..." However, mail has always indicated our members like to see these old stories; the older members because they bring back days gone by, and the younger members are always intrigued to learn what was being said about Bing at different stages of his epic career.

The following is a good example as it touches on what may be termed a turning-point in that career. In truth, his career wasn't really half-way when the story was written but the writer shows highly creditable forecasting ability in saying that his career "seems all set for another 21 years"....actually, it went on for another 25 years! The article appeared in PICTUREGOER of Septmber, 1952 and is reproduced in its entirety, with our grateful acknowledgements to that film-magazine.

B-I-N-G

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CROSBY IS CHANGING - AFTER EASING HIS WAY ALONG ALL THE ROADS OF SHOW BUSINESS HE EASES HIS WAY INTO A GRACEFUL MATURITY IN 'Just for You'. HERE, TO MARK HIS TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF TOP STARDOM, IS A CROSBY COMPENDIUM, COMPILED BY MARGARET HINXMAN.

Whoever heard of a musical comedy hero who not only reveals middle-age with a thickening waistline, but also gives every indication of positively enjoying his maturity, complete with grey toupee? More, that same hero who, not many films back, was double-crossing Bob Hope to win Dorothy Lamour, turns up with a fully-grown son and daughter.

For that's what Bing Crosby does in JUST FOR YOU, which starts out on its rounds of local cinemas next week. And, of course, Crosby gets away with it.

But then, Crosby's most practised in the business of getting away with things. Throughout his twenty-one years in pictures he has overcome obstacles of the type that have brought down better actors, better comics and - dare I say it? - better singers. And so Bing goes on.

Now, just nudging the half-century mark, the man seems all set for another twenty-one years in show business. Although, let's face it, we'll have to get used to this grey-toupeed Crosby.

Even so, JUST FOR YOU takes the 'Crosby's no chicken' attitude to ruthless lengths. It casts him as a famous Broadway producer, a father with sone and daughter troubles, and an altar date with Jane Wyman on his mind. The songs are

pleasant, the comedy is slight, and the sentimentality is over-strained.

WEARS THE YEARS GAILY

Technicolor is an impartial recorder, playing no favourites. But Bing comes out of it triumphantly. He wears his years - his added poundage and the crow's feet around his eyes - as gaily as younger men wear good looks and slim torsos.

His singing style is lazier than ever, and he even pauses to puff and pant during one of his numbers. He shambles idly through a dance routine.

If ever an entertainer dared the customers to take him as he is, that man is Crosby. We take him - and ask for more.

Off-screen, he has been the most complete illusion-shatterer of them all. No virulent gossip-writer could have been as tough on Crosby as Crosby.

He has joked so often about his toupee that if in a film he suddenly swept it off, the gag would be a riot.

Whereas many other stars who have been clever with their cash are inclined to keep quiet about it. Crosby makes no secret of his shrewd business sense and his million-dollar fortune.

He joins his friend Hope in ridiculing his golf and his race horses, and cheerfully takes a verbal or vocal beating from his large son, Gary.

His fads and foibles are as well known as Mr. Churchill's, but more publicised.

On screen, perhaps, his studio tried to keep alive a few illusions. Few picturegoers took them seriously, but anyway, it was a gesture.

For the last ten years, in such films as RIDING HIGH, THE EMPEROR WALTZ, GOING MY WAY, and HERE COMES THE GROOM, Bing has played puckish hero types, and you fixed his age to suit your fancy.

Now you have to admit that this deliberately older screen Crosby comes as a bit of a shock - not an unpleasant shock but a shock for all that.

Its as if Peter Pan had suddenly grown a moustache, or that the 'Laughing Cavalier' had lost his laugh.

The impression doesn't stick. Soon enough you realise that this is just a reasonable development in the Crosby career, and no ominous milestone.

The dangerous age for the Crosby career was back in the middle 'Thirties, when he was playing the blue-eyed warbler with a strong heart-appeal. The romantic crooner who wooed Leila Hyams with 'Please' in THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1932, and mooned at Mary Carlisle in COLLEGE HUMOUR, was just a romantic; a novelty, as movie singers went, but no proven stayer.

Crosby is at his best with children. In some of his pleasantest films Bing has teamed with a bunch of youngsters, and the result has always been charming. Remember his partnership with a cheerful little chap named Donald O'Connor in

SING YOU SINNERS? And the two French children in HERE COMES THE GROOM?

When Crosby won the 1944 Academy Award for his performance as the Roman Catholic priest in GOING MY WAY, no one knocked. It may have been the most blatant cheating, yet it was a well-deserved reward for a guy with the smoothest line in movie technique.

In fact, his screen performances are so much more a pleasant occasion all round than a regular acting chore. He saunters into the scene - a fellow happily rejoining old friends.

CARRIES ON THE FEUD

In the ROAD pictures, all pretence at 'acting' goes by the board. Its simply Hope and Crosby - Dottie Lamour aiding and abetting - carrying on the hilarious feud they have nourished so merrily off-screen.

If the Paramount chiefs blanch slightly on occasion at the wad of high-priced talent going into each film - the ROAD TO BALI will be the sixth of the series - they keep the ROAD journeys going.

To say that Bing is still the top is an understatement. 'Tops' suggests a risky spot, one with a concealed trap-door that leads only downwards.

But there's no question of down for Bing. He's a movie institution, firm and solid, as Gable - perhaps more so. Although he may no longer be number one in the American and British exhibitors' 'biggest money-maker' polls, he is, nevertheless, still well up.

For this reason its wise of Paramount to ease him into middle-age on the screen in JUST FOR YOU. Crosby has had his fair share of poor scripts, but he has always risen above them. He rises above the rather maudlin father-and-son complications of JUST FOR YOU. Despite the grey toupee and expanding waistline.

The way an impartial critic saw Mr. C. thirty-one years ago. Perceptive as she was, she could not forsee that in just four years' time - 1956 - Bing would appear in one of his biggest film successes, looking not unduly middle-aged either! And singing superbly - so superbly that it brought another million selling record at that comparatively late stage. HIGH SOCIETY, of course, and TRUE LOVE with Bing at his elegant, assured, yet retiring best.

Jane Wyman, co-starring with Bing in the film that prompted the above article, JUST FOR YOU, is, coincidentally, to be seen regularly on TV in one of those glossy 'power-game' serials, FALCON CREST.

Jane also appeared with Bing a year earlier in HERE COMES THE GROOM.

CROSBY CO-STAR PARADE

THE 1952 'PICTUREGOER' feature on Bing contained a parade of his leading ladies:

LEILA HYAMS: The Big Broadcast of 1932
MARY CARLISLE: College Humour (1934); Double or Nothing (1938) Dr. Rhythm (1938)
MARION DAVIES: Going Hollywood (1934)
JUDITH ALLEN : Too Much Harmony (1934)
CAROLE LOMBARD: We're Not Dressing (1934)
MIRIAM HOPKINS: She Loves me Not (1935)
KITTY CARLISLE: She Loves me Not (1935); Here is my Heart (1935)
JOAN BENNETT: Two for Tonight (1935); Mississippi (1935)
LYDA ROBERTI: The Big Broadcast of 1936 (1936)
ETHEL MERMAN: Anything Goes (1936)
FRANCES FARMER: Rhythm on the Range (1937)
MADGE EVANS ; Pennies from Heaven (1937)
MARTHA RAYE : Waikiki Wedding (1937); Double or Nothing (1938)
SHIRLEY ROSS : Waikiki Wedding (1937); Paris Honeymoon (1939)
ELLEN DREW : Sing you Sinners (1938)
FRANCISKA GAAL: Paris Honeymoon (1939)
JOAN BLONDELL : East Side of Heaven (1939)
LOUISE CAMPBELL: The Star Maker (1940)
GLORIA JEAN : If I Had My Way (1940)
DOROTHY LAMOUR: Road to Singapore (1940); Road to Zanzibar (1941); Road to Morocco (1942); Dixie (1943); Road to Utopia (1945); Road to Rio (1948); *Road to Bali (1953)
MARY MARTIN : Rhythm on the River (1941); Birth of the Blues (1942).
MARJORIE REYNOLDS: Holiday Inn (1942); Dixie (1943).
RISE STEVENS : Going My Way (1944)
BETTY HUTTON : Here Come the Waves (1945)
INGRID BERGMAN: The Bells of St. Mary's (1946)
JOAN CAULFIELD: Blue Skies (1946); Welcome Stranger (1947)
JOAN FONTAINE : The Emperor Waltz (1948-49)
RHONDA FLEMING: A Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1949)
ANN BLYTH : Top o' the Morning (1949)
COLEEN GRAY: Riding High (1950)
NANCY OLSEN: Mr. Music (1950)
JANE WYMAN : Here Comes the Groom (1951); Just for You (1952)
*NICOLE MAUREY: Little Boy Lost (1953); High Time (1960).
*ROSEMARY CLOONEY: White Christmas (1954)
*GRACE KELLY : The Country Girl (1954) High Society (1956)
*INGAR STEVENS: Man on Fire (1957)
*DEBBIE REYNOLDS: Say One for Me (1959)
*JOAN COLLINS : Road to Hong Kong (1962)

* The 1952 article could not include the films made after that year but for completeness we have added them. The list does not, of course, include ALL the girls that appeared in Crosby films only those classified as 'leading'; nor does it include TV films such as High Tor, Dr. Cook's Garden and any others.

"I know that I
Will be contented with yesterday's memories,
Knowing you think of me -
Once in a while....."

(Remarkably and with particular poignancy the final lines of ONCE IN A WHILE, the last song Bing sang just a few days before his lamented passing in October, 1977; a final wish, perhaps, with which we have no difficulty in complying....)

Millions of people all over the world continue to think of Bing with affection, respect, and admiration - his "last request" wasn't needed.

But it had particular significance on the night of May 7th last when, four days after what would have been Bing's 80th birthday he was thought of in a very particular and special way.....it was a noteworthy occasion and perhaps the largest single gathering of people with one aim in view - thinking of Bing in a very special way....

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A NIGHT AT THE WALDORF

Shortly after the last Leeds get-together, JOHN MARSHALL confided to me his dream; a man and his dream, it might be said. Certainly appreciating that the Leeds event is popular and indeed extremely pleasant John felt that while it suited a lot of members to visit this considerable West Yorkshire city it may not be quite so attractive to more southerly-based members - and what a pity it was that nothing was ever arranged for them. And indeed, why not in London itself?

John obviously mulled over this and suddenly the inspiration hit him - metaphorically speaking, of course. 1983 would have been Bing's 80th birthday, so why not mark the occasion? Frankly, I was not too sanguine. The idea was full of merit - but a London meeting was a bold venture. We haven't done a member-density-map of the Circle but it did seem there were certainly enough for whom London would be a reasonably comfortable journey. On the other hand, times are hard, and getting harder. Some of our members are aged; many are retired; many now, sadly, have been made redundant - and there are so many calls on depleted cash. So ran my arguments. Happily, John dismissed them and proceeded alone. That is important - totally alone!

And as well over 200 members (and friends!) testified his efforts were a splendid, even a spectacular success. If we had needed any confirmation (and we didn't really) that Crosby people are friendly, sociable, 'salt of the earth' people it was shewn in abundance on May 7th last at the Waldorf Hotel in London's Aldwych. Such a night - it really was!

Yet really it was more for the function went on for between nine and ten hours! Goodness knows what time the first-arrivals got there. We were there shortly after four in the afternoon and already a sizeable crowd was in animated conversation. The Waldorf is a very big hotel and our concern was in the Adelphi Suite, through a sumptuous foyer where a notice proudly announced a function in honour of "Bing Crosby's 80th Birthday".

And here John Marshall's hand was particularly in evidence. Large posters had been contrived covering every one of Bing's major films and were displayed around the lounge. Above the bar in giant gold letters was the name B I N G. There was what might well be described as a picture-gallery holding pictures of many celebrities of show-business sending warmest greetings for the success of this particular function. A non-stop stream of (mostly) vintage Bing records played over the sound system - loud enough to be heard and appreciated but not too loud so as to make conversation difficult. A very,very appropriate and elegant setting.

And they continued to arrive until, as remarked earlier, well over two hundred people were present. And not, let it be stated, a collection of octogenarians or thereabouts! No sir. In fact, the number of young people was quite noticeable. The atmosphere was good; not a pessimistic character with a crab-apple face was going to show up <u>there!</u>

They came from Manchester, Leeds, Gateshead, Newcastle, Birmingham, Southampton, Portsmouth, Wales - and the Isle of Wight! There were those who had the comparatively comfortable journey from the environs of London itself. But it was plain that people from all over the country had rallied round for this fine Bing day, sparing the not inconsiderable aspects of expense - and for those staying overnight, plus a long journey, it was indeed expensive.

That comprised the main body tho' of course we have by no means listed all the towns from which people converged on the Waldorf, Hotel any more than we are going to start naming names. That would be quite invidious without giving the complete list of all that attended.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS:

But there were visitors who might fairly be called distinguished. Firstly there was KEN TWISS, founder and head of the Bing Crosby Historical Society, all the way from Bing's birthplace in Tacoma. Priscilla Koernig, you will recall, was present at our last Leeds event. Its especially nice that we are getting these American representatives.

There was ALAN FISHER, once butler to Bing (and his family!).

CHRIS. ELLIS, we imagine, was particularly welcome as the compiler/producer of the latest Crosby album, BING SINGS BROADWAY.

The Isle of Wight has already been referred to and it was, naturally, our good and dear friend LESLIE GAYLOR who arrived from there - tho' it happens he wasn't the sole representative of that popular isle.

But we haven't mentioned Ireland! And it was from there that several members flew across to attend. Among them, GEORGE O'REILLY, the impressario who met Bing and family many times and indeed, produced the TV show Bing did in the Emerald Isle in the mid-60's. This was Bing's first-ever visit there and it was reported he had tears in his eyes when he first stepped on to Irish soil, no doubt thinking of his mother's forbears.

The meal was slightly delayed in being served - the fault of the hotel not the organiser! Though this resulted in more talking-time it did, unfortunately, throw the rest of the night into a degree of trying-to-get-it-all-in syndrome.

It must have been all of 9.30 before the meal was over. With the minimum of fuss JOHN MARSHALL introduced George O'Reilly who dealt at some length with the consternation all felt at Gary's [illegible] and ended up with the very pertinent question: What was it all about for he, like everyone else, found out in the final chapter that Gary after all loved his father!

KEN TWISS spoke briefly though with obvious sincerity of his pleasure at being there and meeting so many dedi-

cated Bing admirers and that they in the States had the greatest respect for the way Bing was remembered and honoured in Britain.

Yours truly had the opportunity of saying how good it was to meet so many of our members for the first time - and to confirm what really good people they were, too. As so many had asked, I was able to tell them that the Circle members consisted of factory workers, shopkeepers, train-drivers, signalmen, civil servants, other office workers, a few doctors, a few solicitors (and their clerks!) and even half a dozen men of the cloth ! All of which showed that membership of the Circle was a fairly general slice of the population. After George O'Reilly only a brief reference to Gary seemed call for on my part and I thought that it was a terrible pity that a young man who had everything going for him had so wasted it all, referring not only to the book. But, the important thing was that I had yet to meet, or hear from anyone, who had had his or her opinion of Bing one whit changed as a result of these 'revelations'. After paying tribute to the enterprise, energy and courage of the organiser, JOHN MARSHALL, that was the end of the speechifying!

THE CABARET:

Then it was the turn for the singer all had heard about but few had heard. ROY CHAPPELL himself from Manchester - and Roy was at his sparkling best. Powerfully yet melodiously and in truly dynamic style he went through a selection of the songs we love to hear associated with Bing. And with no little touch of humour, too! Roy does not set out to imitate Bing. He is a dedicated admirer of Bing, can sing well and puts it over with charm to the extent that his listeners are reminded of Bing .. but not because Roy consciously sets out to imitate the maestro. His efforts were well received and there was general delight that Roy was scheduled for a second spot later on. It was here that the dinner-delay began to make itself apparent.

A number of people - principally those not staying in town overnight - felt it was time to start moving around 11pm. Thus Roy's second spot was missed by many for he reappeared quite late. It was a pity for once more Roy demonstrated his ability - and versatility - as a fine performer. And on his invitation he was joined by several members of the audience for impromptu song and dance.

If there was one universal 'beef' or complaint it was a very legitimate one concerning the prices charged for drinks at the special bar. They were really quite exorbitant, even allowing for London, or West-End, aspects. People came away from the bar after getting, say, three or four drinks quite stunned at the £7 or £8 they cost. A small bottle of beer seemed quite 'cheap' at 95p!

THIS WAS NO FAULT OF JOHN MARSHALL WHO WAS DISMAYED EVEN HORRUFUED TO LEARN OF THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS. HE HAD ASKED OF THE MANAGEMENT IF, IN VIEW OF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE SCHEDULED, A SPECIAL TARIFF MIGHT BE IN FORCE. THE ANSWER WAS NO, THE SAME PRICES RULLED THROUGHOUT THE HOTEL.

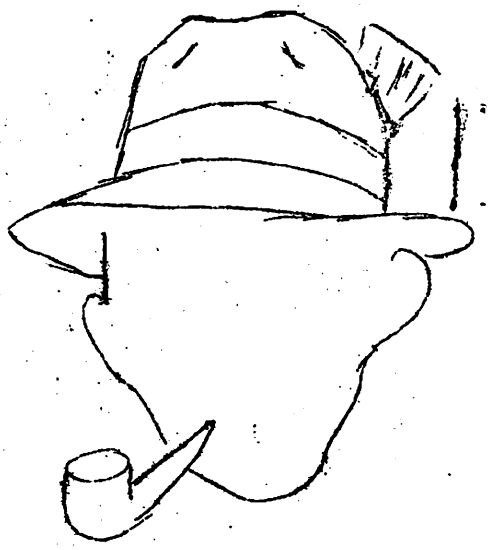
It seemed that the policy was ill-advised for the bar was noticeably neglected; of the half-dozen barmen, arrayed in evening dress, only two appeared to have anything to do - and that at intervals. The bar would have been much better patronised if the prices had been rather more reasonable.

However, it is a point that will be borne in mind for any future occasion. We like the idea - Leeds and London every six months at least.

John Marshall certainly delivered all he promised or intimated and assuredly any minor shortcomings were not of his doing. Far from it - he had clearly worked extremely hard and deserves our thanks and congratulations.

Regarding a next time, it may be of interest that John has already returned CHEQUES (within a week of the Waldorf!) for the next event. This hasn't yet reached the 'think' stage - but at least we understand John would consider changing the venue.

NOTE: On page 22, eight lines from bottom, column two, the missing word is "diatribe". Sorry.



HAVING SEEN THE GUEST LIST AFTER THE EVENT, I FEEL I MUST SAY HOW APPALLED I WAS TO LEARN OF THE PRESENCE OF MANY LONG-TERM 'LETTER' FRIENDS AT THE WALDORF WHOM SOMEHOW I CONTRIVED NOT TO MEET. THIS QUITE BAFFLES ME, FOR I SPENT ALL OF SIX HOURS IN WHAT SEEMED NON-STOP TALKING AND GREETINGS. YET I MISSED THESE VALUED FRIENDS I HAD SO LONG WANTED TO MEET. I CAN ONLY EXPRESS MY REGRET AND GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT. IF AND WHEN THERE IS A "NEXT-TIME" I WILL STAND AT THE DOOR FROM THE START AND MAKE SURE I MISS NO ONE!

AND A WORD OR TWO FROM JOHN MARSHALL :

There is nothing quite so fearsome, snapping at your heels and glaring at you with its little red eyes, as hindsight! The things you MEANT to do, and SAY, the plans that slipped slightly out of focus, the hands you wanted to shake - only its 2.00 am on Sunday, May 8th, and just that bit too late. Call it experience though and, as with any experience, something that only comes after the event but is valuable beyond price. Boiled down to an essence, the main ingredient of May 7th is the urgent need to thank each and every single soul who walked through that door and entered into the swing of it all. Without your patience time and money I'd have been whistling the proverbial Dixie. What a nice bunch you all are, willing to commit so much on a premise so vague and for every one who, hopefully, sensed that an effort was being made to give Bing the kind of day he deserved, there had to be a few who came along simply because the name had been mentioned on local radio. There were quite a few of these and they were vocal in praise of a new door being opened for them. Fools that they are, they had no idea Crosby clubs existed in the way they do.

Such charming fools, though, and a pleasure to introduce them to this higher realm. Ken Twiss, Alan Fisher, Chris Ellis, George O'Reilly provided a valued icing but the heart of the matter just hopped on a train and squeezed the budget till it choked. And joined in with such gusto and enthusiasm that anytime after five you had to be a lip-reader above the volume of conversation and the smack of palm on palm.

The booze? It might have melted us all a little sooner but rest assured that as virtually a non-drinker, I had not the slightest idea they were asking the moon. The schedule fell apart a couple of times and I apologise to anyone having to leave prior to Roy's second half. Forces beyond my control- and what kind of a day would it have been minus a hiccup or two? Letters are written with that same hindsight and reflect the feeling of pleasure at many new friendships and faces put to names, I've already had enough letters to guarantee that I need not cling to a private fear that maybe I'd exceeded my reach. A big kiss for all such kindly thoughts. As Leslie Gaylor put it: "You can really feel Bing around here somewhere."

Let's hope he was.

Editor: Well, I hope you all grasped John's message. I did. I think - but I'm gonna read it again, two or three times!

I'm jesting, of course, though John does prefer the cryptic approach!

MRS. MARY WHITAKER, 69 Fairfield Rd., Tadcaster, North Yorks. LS24 9SW has for sale BING & THE DIXIELAND BANDS, BING'S HOLLYWOOD Nos. 13-5-11 and a good copy of ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS - all sleeves in mint condition too. Realistic offers invited please.

LESLIE GAYLOR

WRITES :

Although I am certain the Waldorf experience has been adequately reported elsewhere, may I say what a delight it was for me to meet so many of you there when we assembled to celebrate 'The Life and Times of Harry Lillis Crosby on the occasion of his 80th birthday.

The great keenness and admiration for the late Bing shone through from all those present - a goodly throng indeed - which helped to make the event a truly memorable one. Names well-known to me and others perhaps lesser-known, please accept my thanks in giving me the chance to meet you all - and for thar kind reception I was afforded.

There was a great layout of photos relating to Crosby films, etc. etc and I therefore gladly count myself among the Happy Chorus I am sure has been extended to JOHN MARSHALL for organising the event and all his great efforts: A big thank you! It was a great occasion, memorably marked. And I'm sure a ll welcomed the opportunity to meet - and hear! - our Editor, Reg.

Which reminds me I heard mention of Reg on the "78 Programme" on Radio Solent recently, presented by Gerry Didymus and I got the impression, rightly or wrongly, that nothing in song or record had been worthwhile since 1939!

Record collectors like us live for that unexpected twist of fate that does occur from time to time. Such a twist happened for me - a particular record I had wanted for years and years and had finally abandoned as a hopeless search, was suddenly in my possession.

There is a man here on the Isle of Wight who is a specialist in 78rpm records and he certainly knows his subject especially the mid-20's, 30's and 40's. He is, incidentally, a friend of the remarkable record man, Brian Rust.

Occasionally Mark makes a trip to London where he knows where all the best junk-shops are - a rich source, of course, for old 78s. Meeting him after a recent trip I found him very enthusiastic about a goodly number of those famous old 'Warner-Brunswick' of Bing's, numbered between 1297 and 01879 - and more than one copy in many cases. A find indeed, as all were in perfect condition. Although well-loaded up with records he picked up just one copy of STARLIGHT for just 25p. Although he had this favourite Crosby recording on the war-time reissue on the Columbia label it was his wish to own the original British release on the Warner-Brunswick label. Then it struck me: the reverse side of 1297 was HOW LONG WILL IT LAST? - the very record that had so eluded me for years and years. Naturally, I have the song on LP and tape - but I too wanted this 78! Mark was sympathetic when I went back to him and we struck a satisfactory deal. And I got a wonderful sense of satisfaction as I held, at last, the disc in my hands and noted its perfect condition. As I say, we all get these experiences from time to time and what a bonus they are.

In the last issue of BING I read with interest the points of view expressed by Ray Leach and Editor Reg as well as others concerning John Scott Trotter's arrangements and accompaniments for Bing on well over 300 recordings. If I may say so, I think John Scott did great work for Bing - and certainly Bing himself was of that opinion. When one considers the prolific output John Scott was responsible for, both for records and radio shows - and always against the clock - I think he did extremely well, especially - and its an important point - he didn't ever set out to 'show-case' his orchestra as became the fashion later - as the Editor rightly pointed out.

I often discussed this with Bing and I recall a particular occasion in a London hotel in 1972 when another leading Crosbyite remarked to Bing

that John Scott Trotter "provided your best accompaniments", with which Bing enthusiastically agreed.

As Ray Leach said, the Nelson Riddle arrangements and backing provide a superb package on the RETURN TO PARADISE album. But here, I maintain, we have a cast-iron example of modern recording techniques and how they have tended to develop. Priority is given to showing off the arrangements and accompaniment with a tendency to put Bing in the background; this was never the case with the JST orchestra. And Bing always sounded best when the balance was in HIS favour. Every time I listen to this Reprise album I find myself wishing Bing had been given the 'priorities' by the producer instead of to the Nelson Riddle orchestra. I'm sure the album would then have been even better than it is.

Another way Bing explained it was: "In the old days they presented my voice in such a way that I was totally identified with the record." I well remember Bing making this observation to me. It is undeniable that it has become something of a cult to "share" the singer with the orchestra - perhaps to catch a bigger market?

There is something, perhaps, in what has been said - and written - to me thousands of times: "I like the old records best..."

Relating to the recently-released German RCA 2-lp set BING CROSBY FOREVER, this package has been imported to this country under the European Common Market Trading Regulations. Any dealer, therefore, should be able to obtain the records from the importers, viz.

Conifer Records
(John D. Deacon Ltd.)
Horton Rd.,
West Drayton,
Midd'x,UB7 8NP

It has been picked up in many shops, however without ordering!

In the last issue of BING I made mention of a <u>possible</u> album release around April consisting of tracks from the 24 Bing/Buddy Cole-Pete Moore CBS radio tracks, held by Ken Barnes & co. As I have not as yet heard anything from Ken I imagine the project has been shelved; let's hope this is temporary and that eventually it will appear.

Before concluding for this time I would like to say thanks to some kind people who have done nice things for me - like Renee Chester, Arnold Baker, and Johnny Jones, while certainly not forgetting such 'ol faithfuls' over in the States like Leslie Wilson and Mr. Justice Francis Smith. And it was good to get the chance to say "Hello!" to KEN TWISS at the Waldorf.

BING ON THE BOX

(RADIO & TELEVISION)

No sooner had the March BING been unloaded at the post office bemoaning that Bing had been scurvily treated by the broadcasting media over Christmas than BLUE SKIES turned up on BBC-TV to be followed soon after by ROAD TO BALI! The latter of course was in the Bob Hope 'season' marking his 80th birthday - such birthdays are suddenly popular! We learn too that a Shirley Temple film, STOWAWAY was recently screened. What's that got to do with us? Well, Les Street who saw it tells us that a CHINAMAN did an impression of Bing singing PLEASE! Very good as well, says Les.

Our charming young friend, ETHEL WATERS of West Norwood wrote re. BLUE SKIES: "Expecting that at least one of the four channels would show a Bing film over the (last Christmas) holiday I got myself a video recorder. What a disappointment that not even WHITE CHRISTMAS was shewn. Then came BLUE SKIES and I am now the proud possessor of my first Crosby film on tape. Its curious that BLUE SKIES was the first film I ever recorded on my tape recorder. Another memory of BLUE SKIES I have was when we were on holiday in Spain and the film was shewn on Spanish TV. Although the songs were original (happily!), the dialogue had been dubbed in Spanish. Very enjoyable - but we couldn't understand a word of it!"

Many have had that experience in a foreign land; there would be no point at all if the songs also were dubbed!

Then there was the GRACE KELLY STORY in which a scene from THE COUNTRY GIRL was simulated with an actor playing Bing. I was completely astonished to read a couple of critics' views that this "Bing" was credible. To me he didn't look even remotely like Bing. There was oneamusing line in the dialogue, however, when Grace was told, sorrowfully, "that Mr. Crosby didn't want her in the part - and what Mr. Crosby doesn't want he doesn't get!" In this case, of course, he did!

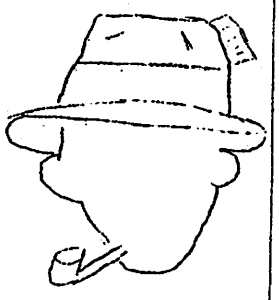
On radio, many members enjoy the Bing coverage that Benny Green and David Jacobs provide - increasing in some views. Local radio continues to do fairly well by Bing - Chas. Wilkinson had a really splendid letter of tribute to Mr. C. read out in its entirety over Irish radio, complete with two or three records to mark Bing's birth date.

But the real radio tit-bit was instigated by our JOHN BIGNELL, who now writes:

THE BRIAN RUST TRIBUTE TO BING - THE JAZZ SINGER

As members will know, I suggested to Brian Rust some time ago that he could mount a super show to honour Bing's 80th anniversary and to herald the big event at the Waldorf Hotel, by devoting his Capital Radio Sunday evening of May 1st to illustrating Bing as the Jazz Singer Supreme. To my delight, Brian put the idea to his producer who liked the idea and consequently those of us in the London area were able to hear Bing's virtues as a jazz singer extolled as, perhaps, they never have been before.

I had sent Brian a list of some 30 jazz-orientated numbers and quite a number of my suggestions were adopted. The full list of records played - thirteen in all - was as follows:



Jazz singer !

Wistful and Blue	(1926)
Rhythm King	(1928)
My Kinda Love	(1929)
After You've Gone	(1929)
One More Time	(1931)
Stay on the right Side	(1933)
Some of these days	(1932)
Someday Sweetheart	(1934)
Be Honest with me	(1941)
Zing a little Zong	(1952)
Oh! Baby mine	(1954)
Whispering	(1957)
In the Good old summertime	(1977)

Who - me ?

I was particularly pleased that ONE MORE TIME was included as I regard this as Bing's hottest-ever recording with Gus Arnheim and, strangely, the only one of his recordings with Gus Arnheim that was originally issued in this country.

It was a little disappointing that neither of the great numbers Bing recorded with Grady Martin was included (TILL THE END OF THE WORLD and JUST A LITTLE LOVIN',)nor any of the three numbers he did on radio with the tremendous Firehouse 5 Plus 2. I should add that I did NOT suggest ZING A LITTLE ZONG and don't really know how this rather mundane (as far as jazz is concerned) effort got in among this great collection. On the other hand, I did not either suggest OH! BABY MINE with Guy Lombardo and yet I was delighted that it was included as it showed how great a combination these two were and how unfortunate that they did not record together more frequently.

It is possible that Brian intended to commence his programme with a mention of the source of the inspiration for the programme - not that I looked for personal praise but it would have been nice for the ICC and perhaps the Waldorf to have been mentioned. Earl Hines, the legendary jazz pianist had died shortly before the programme went out and Brian devoted the first few minutes to a tribute to Earl - operating on a tight schedule this may have been time lost for the items I've mentioned.

But we did at least get a genuine radio programme about Bing - the Jazz Singer, and that hasn't happened before as far as far as I'm aware.

Good work on John's part; and realising that the programme could only he heard by a limited number in listening range, John says he is prepared to duplicate the programme on cassette for £2.00, including post and packing.

Still on radio, LESLIE GAYLOR has always regretted that the songs from the Longines Society set, THE SONGS I LOVE have received scant playing on the air. In an effort to correct this he wrote to David Jacobs and got a reply from his producer which said:

Dear Mr. Gaylor,

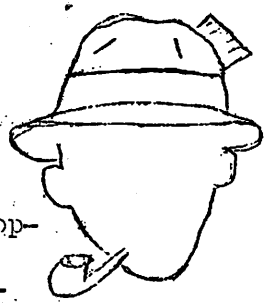
Thank you for your letter to David Jacobs, who sends his very best wishes. As it so happens we had already programmed the music for Saturday 7th May, with Bing's recording of NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT included.

I have long been an admirer of the great man, and so am grateful for the information you've given me about the two sets of albums, THE SONGS I LOVE. I will order them from the Library and you will almost certainly hear something from one of them in June. We've programmed that far ahead.

With all good wishes,

KEN EVANS. 4.5.83

DESERT ISLE BRAVES!



Yes, braves! Though DON WOOD'S idea of enlarging the desert island discs i to albums brought a lot of approving mail, the truth is, alas, that most writers - to use the current jargon - chickened out! Too difficult - can't possibly pin it down, and so on. But come, difficult to name eight singles agreed - but eight albums? Surely not.

However, some braves were more realistic and took the plunge. Here is a small selection from those prepared to be positive!

JOHN BYRON, Tone Street, Ballina, Co. Mayo, Ireland: MUSICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY, 5 LPs - because the first part has Bing with the backing I love best, Buddy Cole Trio; lovely intimate singing, while the second has the best of Bing's best years. Then there is Bing talking about those songs all the way through about them and their times as only be can. Then HOW THE WEST WAS WON; I've always loved the cowboy theme, all the way from Gene Autry to John Wayne but this is the record of the Wild West. Its a different Bing - Bing the actor, Bing master of dialects, the best of Bing and Rosie - and THE STREETS OF LAREDO. That makes seven albums so for the final one I would take the newest, BING SINGS BROADWAY. Great singing, very clear recording, lovely backings which do not intrude on the singing.

Editor: Pretty good selection, too - with valid reasons, and covering a lot of ground in an ingenious way.

LES BRICE, 40 Crown Rd., Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, CO15 1AT:

SHILLELAGHS AND SHAMROCKS (LAT8106) Though not coming from the Emerald Isle I, like most people, enjoy Irish songs, especially if Bing is singing them. Even with the 'bum' note Bing hits on THE DONOVANS, this album is a joy - lovely for any depressing day on that coral reef.

HOME ON THE RANGE (LAT8152) Beautiful set of songs ranging from the haunting GOLDMINE IN THE SKY to the carefree OLD COWHAND. Songs for every mood here.

FANCY MEETING YOU HERE (RD27105) Here, for me, is the quintessence of the mature Bing...the line 'When Elvis Presley bows, I just nod..' sums it all up. Here's Bing in absolute command. The asides, ad-libs and singing just superb. An album that cannot be overlooked.

BING IN PARIS (AH122). Ten of these songs were recorded over a 4-year period that contains many gems for me. A time when I bought my first Bing record and so a very special set of memories are captured here.

GREAT COUNTRY HITS (T2346) A bitter-sweet set this. Songs of unrequited love like STILL, HELLO WALLS, &c. and a few of joyous abandon. Couldn't leave this behind.

RETURN TO PARADISE ISLANDS (R-6106) Perhaps a strange choice for a desert island - who'd need songs to remind you of the predicament you're in? But this album contains some of the most hauntingly lovely songs that the Master ever recorded - LOVE AND ALOHA, MY TANE, FOR EVERMORE. This album just has to be included.

AT MY TIME OF LIFE (UAS 29956) An album from Bing's final great years. This pipped the rest by just one song, namely MY HEART STOOD STILL - as mine always does when hearing the Master sing it. Even though I don't think the backing does justice to Bing it contains some lovely tracks and will bring memories of happier times flooding back.

Finally, A CHRISTMAS SING WITH BING (LAT8216) - actually it was a toss-up between this and the Warner Bros. album I WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS but I found for the former because I'd need to hear Bing's speaking voice. A lovely collection of Christmas songs, too.

Editor: No early-30's man here! Nice selection, though.

BARRY HOLLOWDAY, 6 Heo Green, Wick, Littlehampton, Sussex:

BING CROSBY COLLECTION VOL II (CBS31656) What better cornerstone of my choice on being marooned than this beautiful selection from Bing's vigorous golden age, when I too was a young man and revelled in each song, a masterpiece in itself, with a sound we had never heard before.

SONGS OF THE ISLANDS (MCFM2839) If my island is one of silver sands, blue lagoons and waving palms, this collection is a "must" to complete the scene. On the other hand, if its just a bleak, barren, rock-pile, then I'm going to need it to do a little making-believe. (Dorothy Lamour might help in both cases? - Ed.)

THAT TRAVELLIN' TWO-BEAT (Capitol SM11736) Nice for an old castaway to hear a lively female voice joining Bing in a selection of songs bound to get your solitary feet tapping and tempt you to join in and grab a chorus here and there. Let's take this for Crosby, Clooney & Crusoe. (Rosie then - forget Dottie! - Ed)

BING & CO (MCFM2773): In remote isolation one would need a good party as a morale booster and here Bing is joined in a pleasant blend of nonsense and sentiment by wife, son, and friends, all of whom have for so long seemed to be members of our own family.

THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT (UA929730): One would have plenty of time to reflect upon one's past and the value of good companionship. This album would be a great reminder of times spent in congenial company and help with a philosophy to withstand one's exile.

SEASONS (Polydor 2442 151): Chances are that desert island will not display for my delight the fascinating and enchanting pageant of the passing seasons back home, so I would need Bing to bring a vivid voice-picture of all four seasons. And to be reminded that this was his last album. I could continue to rejoice in the fact that he finished as he started - on top!

HAPPY HOLIDAY (Spokane No.6): This happiest of records would often serve the dual purpose of creating the atmosphere for spiritual needs, as well as allowing "Mr. Christmas" to help me celebrate the yuletide season as only he knew how. I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS has got to be the greatest Christmas song ever and couldn't fail to draw me close to those back home at such a time - even if I couldn't make the song come true - just then.

DER BINGLE (Spokane No. 3): If Bing could light up the dark days from which all these tracks come, they would be a sure-fire tonic in my enforced sojourn on the "dot on the map", and would be a nice reminder of the guys and gals who left hearth and home to ensure these sea and air lanes were kept free - to perpetuate my chances of being rescued - records and all!

Editor: And very nice too - you know, where Barry says above "Grab a chorus here and there..." I can almost hear Bing saying that! Most characteristic.

What about me - your Editor? Was I one of those who chickened out I hear you saying? No sir: I will assuredly give my eight in the next issue.

And perhaps yours too - if you care to get down to it !

ECHOES OF THE WALDORF

"...I was a Redcap (MP) st the time; this soldier was hanging around the married quarters suspicious like. When he saw us he quickly disappeared into one of the quarters...this was out of order and he knew it so we were trying to make up our minds which door he'd gone in - when from one of the windows we heard Bing singing JUST ONE MORE CHANCE ...we walked off smiling. He deserved it for his cheek...." (Overhrard)

"Parking? I managed it - but it took me 20 minutes to walk back here...but that's London!"

To your Editor two or three times: "Is Reg Bristo here?" "Yes, he is - nice to meet you!" Must have been that Oxfam suit, my name tag just wouldn't stick....

"Have you seen the 'picture gallery'? Some hard work went into that by John Marshall - and shows Bing's in no danger of being forgotten by people who matter...."

MARY THROP, down from Doncaster with husband Jim, and friend Anne wrote: "Congratulations to John on a great event; quite a few people including myself would have liked more seats in the reception lounge prior to the meal. Having arthritis I had to get outside and have a sitdown.....everything was great including the dancing. And right to the end John was thoughtful. As we were about to leave we were called back. There was transport to take us back to the hotel where we were to stay the night...

> Editor: Tough on people with disability - but there is a valid psychological reason for the no-seats! If there are seats, on arrival people tend to sit down - and for the rest of the night they are "their" seats. Thus, immovable cliques form - ever been to a wedding reception like that? - and the social atmosphere is impaired. No chairs means you just move around - socially!

Small postscript from John Marshall : "If there are any pictures available all those cameras that kept clicking away I would be glad to see them on a return-postage basis if necessary." Not much to ask, is it.

We were told that some visitors actually arrived at the Waldorf at 9 am Saturday morning! We find this difficult to believe...if it IS true, we can only bow to such enthusiasm!

Elsie Kennedy writes to say her Bing medallion was much admired by many ladies at the Waldorf - to the extent she said she would look up the address of the firm whence it came. This is PORCY MINT LTD., SUTTON, SURREY but Elsie warns it was probably a limited issue and in any case she bought her medallion thro' a press advertisement shortly after Bing died.

"Wasn't it great to meet KEN TWISS - he's doing so much for Bing's memory...but do you know, I never even met JOHN MARSHALL..."
(Good re. KEN - and a shame about JOHN! - Ed.)

BING LETTERS

Understandably, mail has been heavy on account of the Gary book with members - especially the ladies - distressed. The Waldorf event has also swollen the post-bag; as these two happenings have been adequately dealt with, a selection of letters on other matters is presented - due to pressure on space, not nearly as many as we would like.

GIRVAN PATERSON, 6/23 Paddington Rd., Oakleigh, Victoria, Australia 3166:

Found the March issue of BING most interesting and especially enjoyed the article referring to the two different 'styles' of Bing, pre-1937 and since. I have held a similar view for a long time, although I don't know that I would pinpoint 1937 or WAIKIKI WEDDING as the time his singing style changed. You used the term aggressive in describing Bing's 1930's style, the word I had in mind was dynamic. Much the same thing, I guess. I've always thought that in his early films and recordings Bing was a more dynamic and dashing performer than he was later on, fitting maybe because of his youth. I would have said, however, that Bing's dynamic or aggressive style last till around 1938 or '39. I'm thinking of films like DOCTOR RHYTHM and SING YOU SINNERS, then changed to a more casual style. You used the word 'bland', which I've always thought to mean dull and uninteresting but upon looking it up in my dictionary I find it means'smooth in manner'so maybe its appropriate after all.

I must admit I find the 30's Bing the most entertaining to watch on film and the most 'energetic' on record. However, the beauty of the deep-throated voice of the later Bing cannot be denied. A most intersting article all round and one which I am sure will inspire a lot of comment.

I also found most enjoyable the review of GOING HOLLYWOOD which I had the pleasure of seeing for the first time last year at the Victorian (Australia) Bing Crosby Society and it would have to rate as one of Bing's best. You know, I've often wished that Bing's early films had been in colour (I know KING OF JAZZ was a form of colour but Bing wasn't a 'starrer'). There is now a computer technique that can amazingly colour old black and white movies. So who knows, we may yet see THE BIG BROADCAST, WAIKIKI WEDDING, MISSISSIPPI in glorious colour one day.

Editor: The article ATTACKING BING did indeed produce a lot of comment, almost totally agreeing. We wouldn't be too pedantic about the actual time - Bint was liable to return to the old style every now and then! I mean, look at WALKING THE FLOOR OVER YOU, SOUTH RAMPART ST. PARADE, THAT'S A'PLENTY, JUST A LITTLE LOVIN' and so on. We saw the computer-colour thing on TV and as Girvan says, astonishing. But they did say the snag was it took about £8,000 for two minutes of film! So Girvan's hope isn't likely to be realised, alas. But - imagine the Mack Sennett's in colour!

GEORGE RIDLEY, 11 St. Oswald's Green, Walker, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Reading in the last BING about GOING MY WAY made me think of the first time I saw it. We were stationed in a place called Ledo on the Burma-China border. We were invited to an American base which had a film show in an open field. Yes, the film was GOING MY WAY and was I thrilled. When Bing began singing SWINGING ON A STAR

Reg Bristo,
7 Greenmeadow Close
CWMBRAN,
Gwent, NP44 4PJ.

you could hear the soldiers singing it all over this field and it brought a lump to my throat; that voice so far from home for all of us...

> Editor: Of such things are memories ...and Bing creator of literally millions of them.

G.R.T.(Tom) EVANS, 84 Brereton Rd., New Invention, Willenhall, West Mids: I was so interested to read Vince Waring's letter on p.43 of the last issue. His story is so similar to my own. I have written to him. With great respect your comment in answer to Vince that he is the only member of the pre-War Bing Club to have known Ted Mole suggests you must have forgotten that I have mentioned him time and again and that I was a member from around 1937 and co-organised the Midland branch of the Bing Crosby Friendship Club only to lose touch during the War.

> Editor: True! I had forgotten. I think maybe I'd better put the subs up to £10 a year - and get a computer!That's how its getting these days. We haven't heard from, or of, Ted Mole. Members will know that Tom Evans organises functions still for the West Midlands but they are temporarily in abeyance owing to the loss of their venue, but hope to find a new meeting-place soon.

VIC BYNE, 28 Upton Rd., Slough, Berks: I had a look around record shops in Durban and tho' the range of Bing records wasn't large at least there were SOME. Saw an RCA - GIANTS (Best of Hollywood and Broadway series) not listed in the LPography. Only 3 Bing tracks - OL'MAN RIVER, MAKE BELIEVE both from 1928 and - would you believe - MACK THE KNIEE 1957! Rest of the songs were from a Fred Astaire concert. In the disco-type lightings I misread the artist content - so now have Sinatra singing SUNDAY, MONDAY OR ALWAYS and BE CAREFUL ITS MY HEART, instead of Bing - and at £8.00 odd, too. (Editor: My goodness me, I'd never get over that). And I bought the ORIGINAL FAVOURITES only because I wanted a good, clean, copy of POINCIANA. When I got home and played it there was a flaw - you guessed it - right in the middle of POINCIANA. And that was more than £9.00

Editor: Pretty disastrous all round for Vic; but it illustrates vividly how the true Crosby collector relentlessly pursues the search for Bing records as a priority no matter where he lands! As a matter of interest, South Africa is the only place of major continental importance wherein we do not have a solitary member. Vic made some very interesting points about apartheid but they have no particular relevance in BING. Or do they? No, perhaps not.

RAY MORRIS, 35 St. Ives Grove, Leeds: I would say that up to about 1935 Bing's voice used to flood out and sing the song by itself, almost without conscious effort from Bing. He always sounded as though he thoroughly enjoyed singing - which he did, so much so that he hardly had to think what he was doing and the result was a completely natural flowing melody, free of all artifice. From the mid-30's he seems to have begun to study the frame-work of the song more to fit in with arrangements.....I prefer the early 30's though like everyone else, I hasten to add that I loved all Bing recordings.

Desert Island albums? I would have to take BING 1 (Hollywood series) containing SWANEE RIVER, EASY TO REMEMBER, DOWN BY THE RIVER, and WITH EVERY BREATH I TAKE; these are the tracks which started me off. Another would be the cheapest album I ever bought: CROSBY CLASSICS on Hallmark containing HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN?, SWEET GEORGIA BROWN, ST. LOUIS BLUES, TEMPTATION &c. (earlier issued on Realm).

Editor: Can't go wrong with those - but it is important, it seems, just what records 'set you off'.....

disCrosby

ABOUT BING RECORDS OF ALL DECADES - A NEVER-ENDING SOURCE OF DELIGHT....

And illustrated this time, too! Across the page can be seen a real relic of the past; familiar to older members but perhaps new to the younger ones. Record shops used to be more sedate, perhaps more dignified, than they are today. These leaflets used to be readily available in such shops then in those far-off days before World War II.

****

As you can see, this particular leaflet came out just a month before that holocaust started in September, 1939. It seems, and of course, is, an age away. But what a lovely reminder of how things used to be? Bing had been a world-star for six or seven years already and we were all eagerly looking forward to seeing EAST SIDE OF HEAVEN. In those days we used to get the records well in advance of the film's release here. They weren't held back as they often are today.

****

Note Brunswick's comparative modesty in presenting their brightest star: Recording Personality! None of that Super or Mega-star nonsense - even though Bing certainly was that! Hysterical disc-jockeys were yet in the future! Record presenters invariably referred to him as just plain "Bing!"

*****

Many interesting comparisons can be drawn from those days, too. For example, any of these two records cost 2/6d, or in the modern style, 12½p. Taking it that mainly most items have increased in price by at least thirty times over, that would make a 10" 78rpm record today worth - £3.75p! Instead of which we can buy a LP record for as little as £2.99 - with 16 titles - the equivalent of eight 78s! Clearly we have benefitted from the technological advance in recording. Even allowing for the fact that wages too have advanced by 30 times, we still get a good deal. Half-a-crown, 2/6d - or 12½p used to make a hole in a £3.00 wage packet. For one record! Add to that a lot of us were boys with pocket-money of perhaps 10/- (50p) a week it can readily be understood that the purchase of a record had to be carefully considered! No wonder we formed unofficial co-operatives, with a group chipping in 6d each (2½p) to buy a new Bing record! The problem did eventually arise - who kept the record?

****

Having made the momentous decision to purchase a Bing 78 (or any other, for that matter) the next problem was to get it home in one piece! Those 78s were - and are - very, very fragile. Brittle and liable to crack right across...it must be something of the miraculous that so many hundreds of thousands of them have survived even to the present day for few of us are without some of them. Many of our members do in fact have the very records purchased in 1939, perhaps as a result of picking up the above leaflet. And note that the leaflet proclaims Brunswick to be "the best records". They probably were, too.

****

We were very enthusiastic in a recent DISCROSBY about the song MAYBE, written by Geo. Gershwin - and beautifully sung by Bing on one of the Coral albums. The origin of this song was quite unknown to us so we are grateful to Michael O'Toole of Co. Wicklow in Ireland for the following:

> MAYBE was written in 1926 for Gertrude Lawrence in the show OH, KAY! It came right between DO, DO, DO and SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME. Percy Hammond remarked in the 'Herald-Tribune' that "all of us simply floated away on the canoodling notes of MAYBE. I don't think it has ever been featured in a film but Geo. Gershwin has put it on record as a piano solo.

****

Bing certainly made a fine recording of it, with the very able backing of Victor Young, second only to John Scott Trotter in the number of backings he provided for Bing. This was in June, 1939 - coincidence with our 'leaflet' on the previous page. How come Bing recorded this song so long after its introduction? We know he sang a lot of songs late in their life, but despite its attractive melody, MAYBE has remained comparatively little known. Mind you, we're delighted Bing did record it!

****

1939 was a prolific recording year for Bing, no less than forty-five tracks being made. They included MY ISLE OF GOLDEN DREAMS, oft stated by Bing himself to be his best record, e.g. 'I managed to get some good tones on this....'

****

We've also been put in the picture regarding the song FAREWELL. Remember we asked from whom or what was Bing making such a painful departure - see the last issue DISCROSBY? It is most gratifying that this feature seems to find favour juding by the letters received putting us right on queries raised. That's excellent - we appreciate the involvement entailed.

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In this case, it was "the idiot correspondent" (his words, not mine!) who raised the question of the Goodbyes Bing was singing about. Lionel goes on: "Just ask him if this makes sense. It was written by Tom Blackburn and George Bruns and introduced by Fess Parker - who else? - playing the title role in the Disneyland Television Production of DAVY CROCKETT AT THE ALAMO." So, the song can only be really understood and appreciated in the context of it place in a TV film. The grossly ill-named "idiot" was, of course, Lionel Pairpoint.

****

Lionel also had some comment on YOU ARE THE ONE, another of Bing's recordings we were recently talking about. Lionel says: "Without any special research I would say that YOU ARE THE ONE is almost certainly the work of Carroll Carroll of Kraft Music Hall fame, and John Scott Trotter. There is evidence that they collaborated in song-writing. Carroll has written about the mythical KMH College invented to provide a continuous theme for the commercials in KMH: "The school colours were pomegranate and puce. They were celebrated in a song written by John Scott Trotter and me called 'Hail, KMH!' When the ASCAP strike deprived the Kraft Music Hall of Bing's theme song WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT, JST. made a soaring arrangement of the ridiculous HAIL, KMH! and it served excellently. It is now

in the ASCAP catalogue."

****

The full story of the Kraft Music Hall and Bing's marathon part in it would make a fascinating volume with all the behind-the-scenes crises, guests, songs &c. For those who don't ow, ASCAP stands for the 'American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers'. and as this title indicates, it makes itself the 'owner' or controller of almost everything written or composed in the States. Thus, if they place an embargo, or call a 'strike', recording and broadcasting in America is virtually paralysed.

****

It is a remarkable paradox - and this is not intended as a political comment, merely a statement of facts - that in the land of the free and of Enterprise with a capital "E", that with ASCAP, then MCA and RCA who between them own most of the recorded/broadcast material in the States, not to mention the Musicians' Union, entertainment in almost all of its forms can be brought to a standstill! BLUE OF THE NIGHT was on the ASCAP list, and therefore could not be used on the air when that society banned the broadcasting of its material. To write a new, unregistered, unpublished song was the only way out!

****

However, we are digressing from the main aim - discs. Mail is of never-ending interest; you may like to know that in these days of retirement, your letters are invariably read between 8.30 and 10 in the morning - the postman usually calling around half-eight. And with a cup of tea or two there can't be many pleasanter ways of starting the day. Now and then, not often, however, a letter is opened which causes us such a start that the teapot is in danger from being overturned in our agitation.

****

Such an occasion came quite recently when a member, new to the Circle but assuredly not new to Crosbyana, wrote and said he was surprised to see that The Rhythm Boys record of JIG TIME was not included in any discography. What's this! Eh! What IS this? Rhythm Boys and JIG TIME? Remember the song - bore a distinct resemblance to another one called YES, YES, MY BABY SAID YES YES!

*****

But with the Rhythym Boys...no, definitely not! Was it possible that a Crosby record, albeit with his two colleagues, had been overlooked? Bing's recording career has now been exhaustively searched and re-earched by men who went to enormous trouble over many, many, years, to check the facts. This involved writing to Bing, record companies, orchestra leaders, other artists, all known Crosby experts and so on. A tremendous job which resultedin THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY, the discography upon which all such publications are now based. And none of them, as the writer said, included - JIG TIME!

*****

We can check that this song was recorded by some British dance bands in 1931 - and this must be the clue that if there is a Rhythm Boys record of it it was by the replacement trio Paul Whiteman used when the originals departed, for they had left Whiteman by that year. Without giving the entire lyric which in any case we can't remember, it went:

"Jig time, I gotta have jig time - just gimme that jig-time..."

A good rhythmic song.

CROSBY QUIZ

1. From which song lyrics do the following lines come? -
   (a) All through the night its the same old Manhattan.....
   (b) And those heartaches are they really unimportant things?
   (c) Because of you the wind is wine tonight....
   (d) The day is over with its cares and woes.....

2. What is DON CLARK'S place in Crosby history?

3. On the latest Bing album, BING SINGS BROADWAY, there are 16 titles. Can you name (without looking!) eight of them?

4. What did the following artists have in common ?
   (a) Helen Crawford.
   (b) Buddy Cole.
   (c) Eddie Dunstedter

5. Who provided the accompaniment on THE GREAT COUNTRY HITS album?

6. Nelson Riddle provided the backings for the album RETURN TO PARADISE ISLANDS; he also backed Bing on six other tracks. What are they?

7. Relevant to No. 2 above, what is Gordon Rose's niche in Crosby history?

8. A dozen of Bing's recorded songs begin with "HOW..?" Can you name five?

9. Re. No. 6. above, on what label was the RETURN TO PARADISE ISLANDS album issued?

10. In which Crosby films did the now-celebrated actor Anthony Quinn appear?

11. Both GOING MY WAY and WELCOME STRANGER were, as we are all aware, adorned by Barry Fitzgerald. He also appeared in another popular Crosby film - which?

12. The album, THAT TRAVELLIN' TWO BEAT also appeared under a different title. What is it?

13. Bing recorded LITTLE GREEN APPLES in two very different styles; each version appeared on separate albums. What were they entitled?

14. Similarly, Bing did two entirely different versions of GEORGIA - which two albums did THESE appear on?

15. Who provided the musical backing on HEY JUDE, HEY BING?.

Some easy, some more difficult - you'll have to be pretty knowledgeable to get them all right without, in the first instance at least, consulting reference books or record sleeves !

ANSWERS LATER ON IN THIS ISSUE

Correspondence with our new friend ensued in the course of which he wrote he was sorry he wasn't able to throw a bombshell into the world of Crosbyana! And we're not saying the discographies are the last word; indeed, the compilers have always said they would appreciate any additions, amendments, or comments. But we do feel they - and we - would be surprised now at any additions.

*****

What a mercy it is that someone, somehow, rescued the sound-tracks (and the films!) of those historic Mack Sennett 'shorts'. I remain quite adamant that Bing never sang better than he did on these unlikely, budget cinema filler-in films. AUF WIEDERSEHEN, MY DEAR, LOVABLE, EVERY TIME MY HEART BEATS, FOR YOU and so on are Crosby masterpieces. That they may have been lost for ever hardly bears thinking about.

****

The first-named is not to be confused with a song of a similar name that Vera Lynn recorded with a Forces' chorus some years back. How well I remember AUF WIEDERSEHEN, MY DEAR - one of those songs you recognise from first hearing as a great, melodious, song. I wasn't collecting records when I first heard it - no money, no real ideas - but I knew a good song when I heard it. Many years later, after I had it by several bands, I hunted for a Crosby record of it (having heard him sing it in the cinema, largely unknowing!) but found Bing had not done it commercially. It was many years later again that I discovered it was, naturally, still on this soundtrack. Lo and Behold, it finally came out on record.

****

Much the same could be said of the other titles mentioned; the full throated, vibrant yet sympathetic voice of the earnest young Bing. And that is SOMETHING! I can only repeat: thank Providence we finally managed to get them on record - and for their age, in astonishing quality. How could anyone so casually sing in such masterly fashion? The answer is that in reality Bing wasn't casual at all. He made have fooled us, and himself but in fact when he sang he couldn't help putting all his feelings, all his musical understanding, into it. Then there was that unique timbre!

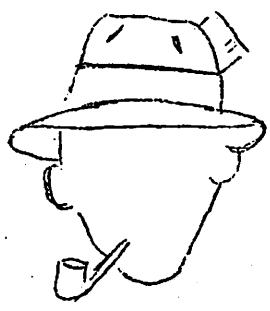
*****

"Come let us stroll down lovers' lane,
Once more to sing love's old refrain,
Soon we must say 'Auf Wiedersehen,
Auf Wiedersehen,' my dear.....

I'll take that stroll any time.

******

May I suggest to all those who get great enjoyment from researching the various facets of Bing's career there is one fertile but so far neglected field - that of the songwriters/composers? I hasten to add, however, that among the many good things in Ken Barnes's book THE CROSBY YEARS are the names of these artistic people.



Who could deny that ROBIN/RANGER who wrote PLEASE, HERE LIES LOVE, LOVE IN BLOOM, WITH EVERY BREATH I TAKE, JUNE IN JANUARY, BLUE HAWAII and many others, or GORDON/REVEL who provided MAY I?, I'M HUMMIN' I'M WHISTLING, SHE REMINDS ME OF YOU, LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR, STRAIGHT FROM THE SHOULDER, I WISH I WERE ALADDIN etc. People like Sonny Burke, Jimmy Van Heusen, Harold Arlen plus the giants like

Where the Blue of the Night

MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY

Why must I live in dreams
Of the days that I used to know?
Why can't I find
Real peace of mind,
And return to the long ago?

Where the Blue of the Night meets the
gold of the day,
Someone waits for me.
And the gold of her hair crowns the
blue of her eyes
Like a halo tenderly.
If only I could see her,
Oh, how happy I would be!
Where the Blue of the Night meets the
gold of the day,
Someone waits for me.

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Swannee River -

Way down upon the Swannee Ribber,
Far, far away,
Dere's wha' my heart is turning ebber,
Dere's wha' de old folks stay.
All up and down de whole creation,
Sadly I roam,
Still longing for de old plantation,
And for de old folks at home.

Refrain

All de world am sad and dreary
Ebrywhere I roam,
Oh! darkies how my heart grows weary
Far from de old folks at home.

All round the little farm I wandered,
When I was young,
Den many happy days I squandered,
Many de songs I sung.
When i was playing wid my brother,
Happy was I,
Oh! take me to my kind old mudder,
Dere let me live and die.

Refrain.

DEAR HEARTS AND Gentle People

Verse and introduction.
There's a place I'd like to be
And it's back in Tennessee
Where your friendly neighbours smile and say hello,
It's a pleasure and a treat to meander down the street
That's why I want the whole wide world to know.

Refrain.
I love those dear hearts and gentle people
Who live in my home town,
Because those dear hearts and gentle people
Will never ever let you down.
They read the good book from Fri' 'til Monday,
That's how the week-end goes.
I've got a dream house I'll build there one day
With picket fence and rambling rose.
I feel so welcome each time that I return
That my happy heart keeps laughing like a clown
I love the dear hearts and gentle people
Who live and love in my home town.

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GOING MY WAY

This road leads to Rainbowville—going my way?
Up ahead is Bluebird Hill—going my way?
Just pack a basket full of wishes
And off you start with Sunday morning in your heart.

Round the bend you'll see a sign—"Dreamers' Highway"
Happiness is down the line—going my way?
The smiles you'll gather will look well on you.
Oh, I hope you're going my way too.

© Chappell Morris Ltd.

PLEASE

Please, lend your little ear to my pleas,
Lend a ray of cheer to my pleas,
Tell me that you love me too.

Please, let me hold you tight in my arms,
I could find delight in your charms,
Every night my whole life through.

Your eyes reveal that you have the soul of
An angel, white as snow;
But how long must I play the role of
A gloomy Romeo?

Oh! Please say you're not intending to tease.
Speed the happy ending and
Please tell me that you love me too.

© Famous Chappell

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN

A long time ago,
A million years B.C.
The best things in life
Were absolutely free,
But no one appreciated,
A sky that was always blue,
And no one congratulated
A moon that was always new;
So it was planned that
They would vanish now and then,
And you must pay before
You get them back again,
That's what storms were made for,
And you shouldn't be afraid.
For every time it rains, it rains,
Pennies from Heaven,
Don't you know each cloud contains
Pennies from Heaven?
You'll find your fortune falling,
All over town.
Be sure that your umbrella,
Is upside down.
Trade them for a package of
Sunshine and flowers.
If you want the things you love,
You must have showers.
So when you hear it thunder,
Don't run under a tree,
There'll be Pennies from Heaven,
For you and me.

Words John Burke, music Arthur Johnston, reproduced by permission of Campbell, Connelly & Co. Ltd.

AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER

You're sophisticated
I am too naive;
Well, let's play the game that way
If that's what you believe:

An apple for the teacher,
That seems the thing to do,
Because I want to learn about
Romance from you.

An apple for the teacher,
To show I'm meek and mild,
If you insist on saying that,
I'm just a problem child.
You'll get all my attention,
Your wish will be my rule;
And maybe you'll be good to me
And keep me after school.
An apple for the teacher,
An apple for the teacher.
That's how I'd better start.
Then after while you may give in
And let me bring my heart.

This is no suggestion
This is no advice;
This is just another way,
Of being very nice:

An apple for the teacher,
Will always do the trick,
When you don't know your lesson
In arithmetic,
An apple for the teacher
Will meet with great success,
If you forgot to memorise
The Gettysburg address.
A little bit of glamour,
A charm that's cute and quaint;
And he'll excuse your grammar and,
Believe you're what you ain't.
You may be just a lemon.
But he'll think you're a peach,
Just bring an apple for the teacher,
When he starts to teach.

Words by John Burke, music by James V Monaco reproduced by permission of Campbell Connelly & Co. Ltd.

JUST ONE MORE CHANCE

Just one more chance,
To prove it's you alone I care for,
Each night I say a little prayer for
Just one more chance.

Just one more night,
To taste the kisses that enchant me,
I'd want no others if you grant me
Just one more chance.

I've learn'd the meaning of repentance,
Now you're the jury at my trial.
I know that I should serve my sentence;
Still I'm hoping all the while
You'll give me just one more word.
I said that I was glad to start out;
But now I'm back to cry my heart out
For just one more chance.

© Famous Chappell

TRUE LOVE

Suntanned, windblown,
Honeymooners at last alone
Feeling far above par,
Oh, how happy we are.

While I give to you and you give to me
True love, true love,
So on and on, it will always be
True love, true love.

For you and I have a guardian angel
On high with nothing to do
But to give to you and to give to me
Love forever true.

© Chappell & Co. Ltd.

Sweet Leilani

Sweet Leilani Heavenly Flower,
Nature fashion'd roses kiss'd with dew,
And then she placed them in a bower,
It was the start of you;
Sweet Leilani Heavenly Flower,
I dream'd of paradise for two.
You are my paradise completed,
You are my dream come true.

Sweet Leilani Heavenly Flower,
Tropic skies are jealous as they shine,
I think they're jealous of your blue eyes,
Jealous because you're mine;
Sweet Leilani Heavenly Flower,
I dream'd of paradise for two.
You are my paradise completed,
You are my dreams come true.

By permission of the Publishers, Campbell, Connelly & Co., Ltd., 10 Denmark Street, London, W.C.2.

Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, the Gershwins and a host of others must have an honoured place in Crosby history. A study of these people is most rewarding - did you know, for example, that Bing himself is credited in at least 12 songs?

****

One finds proof, too, that John Scott Trotter and Carroll Carroll did indeed write songs between them. We've already mentioned YOU ARE THE ONE; now we notice that they also wrote MOONLIGHT ON A WHITE PICKET FENCE! Thus, the study of songwriters is a most rewarding way of learning surprising new things about Bing's records.

AS YOU WILL HAVE SEEN, WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO REPRODUCE SOME OF THOSE LEGENDARY SONGS ON THE TWO PREVIOUS PAGES.

If our new friend was unable to create a sensation with JIG TIME, nevertheless I feel we might just do that on another subject! And for this we have to revert to those marvellous Mack Sennett 'shorts'. Mind, we're far from certain, knowing just how ubiquitous so many of our members are, but in more years than we like to remember we've never seen the subject broached, leave alone answered.

*****

Briefly, who and what orchestra provided the accompaniments for Bing in those great songs we continually laud? The songs do not appear in discographies (except possibly as a footnote) as most of them were never commercially recorded by Bing. But the estimable ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD film encyclopaedia also gives no clue as to the identify of the unknown musical director - and assuredly he deserves to be known and take his place in Crosby history. ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD merely says: "As union musicians were not allowed to work with Crosby during this time Mack Sennett used pipe organ, ukeleles, choirs and recorded music for accompaniments."

****

This only adds to the mystery, for on all of these songs Bing is backed by a really splendid orchestra! One hears strings, brass, reeds and certainly, I feel, the guitar of Eddie Lang - the latter particularly evident in EVERY TIME MY HEART BEATS. Moreover, the way Eddie complements Bing's vocalising seems to indicate these were no nondescript 'recorded music' backings - which in any case, one imagines Sennett couldn't have used as they were certainly more than 'pipe organ, choirs and ukeleles...'

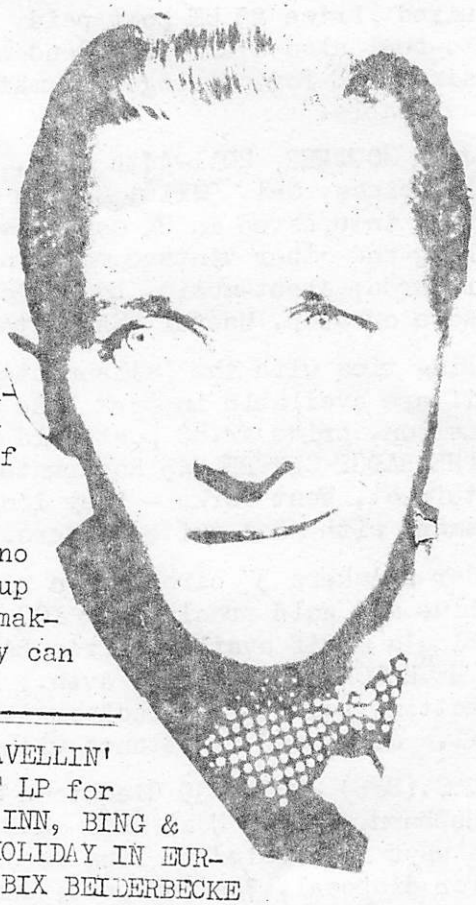
*****

And also, it is well known that Mack Sennett made his shorts on a shoestring; his outlay wouldn't have included a large orchestra! So, what is the answer? Blessed if I know - and I've been interested for well over 50 years.

****

One idea may be that Gus Arnheim (or Jimmy Grier) would have obliged - Bing was still appearing at the Coconut Grove though he left there during the period covered by these films. If anyone can throw light on these Sennett accompaniments we'd be very grateful - but, allowing for the astonishing knowledge of some members, curiously, we're not optimistic this time. Shame if the name(s) have been lost in the mist of time.....

TRADING POST



Here members may advertise their wants & disposals - records, tapes, books &c. There is a nominal charge of £1.00 for non-Crosby items; others are free. Please confine your items to a maximum of 6 lines. If lengthy lists are involved, ask for a stamped addressed envelope for same. All items appear in the utmost good faith and no comment is offered on prices/terms: it is up to members to satisfy themselves they are making an equitable deal and no responsibility can be accepted by us.

MRS. GWEN HARVEY, 33 Canterbury Rd Farnborough, Hants GU14 6QP, wants (for a friend son who always looks for Bing records for her!) a recording of MY CHRISTMAS PRAYER by Billy Fury. May phone (0252-541085.

ALAN CHADWICK, 3 Mortimer Close, Phoenix Green, Hartley Wintney, Nr. Basingstoke, Hants RG27 8EL: I have many 1st generation video items of Bing incl. Christmas shows from '74 & Australian items &c. (VHS only) in exchange for my LP wants, these being, chiefly, Australian club issues, e.g. GOOD & RARE, JUST A LITTLE LOVIN' plus BING'S HOLLYWOOD albums, and others.

ROY BOOTH, 15 Morland Aven., Little Neston, South Wirral, Ches. L64 9RP would like to purchase a cassette of the music from HIGH TOR (Bing & Julie Andrews). Also, Roy would like to hear from anyone living on Merseyside or in Cheshire who would be interested in getting together for social (Crosby) evenings - an excellent idea, too!

PHIL CLARKE, c/O James Copse Rd., Lovedean, Hants: I want to dispose of my 'bust' of Bing - asking price today is £100. I want £75 - hat face, bow-tie....also I have a lot of Bing LPs for sale, incl. 3 10" albums. SAE please for enquiries.

MRS. JANET SNOW, 102 Kings Rd., London Colney, Herts would like to swap TRAVELLIN' TWO-BEAT LP for HOLIDAY INN, BING & BASIE, HOLIDAY IN EUROPE, or BIX BEIDERBECKE LP - the LP is an unplayed duplicated present. Would also like to swap tapings for collections with other Bing admirers.

BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD, is the hard-cover, authenticated, book of ALL Bing's recordings, firstly in date order then in alphabetical order, together with accompanists. This is the book over which you can browse, or refer to, for ever! It also answers all those queries as to "Did Bing record so-and so?" As we write, it remains available at £3.50 post paid but a second pressing is imminent when the price must go up. It can be obtained direct from the publisher

JOHN JOYCE (BOOKBINDERS)
Saltmeadows Rd.,
GATESHEAD,
Tyne & Wear NE8 3AH

It might be added that this book is complete, i.e. it cannot be added to and thus become out-of-date. It starts with Bing's first recording in 1926 and ends with his last in 1977.

JOHN JOYCE (address shewn) is always interested in Crosby records for sale 78s, LPs, EPs, private &c. All letters answered.

ARNOLD BAKER, 48 Groomsport Rd., Bangor, Co. Down, N. Ireland offers a wide sel-

ection of tapes, radio programmes, US/Australian &c., rare items on good quality C120 tapes or as required. Price £3 UK post paid. Reel-to-reel also available. Send medium sized SAE for catalogue of material available.

JACK SOUTHER, 2011-44th Aven., San Francisco, Cal. 94116, US. is always interested in UK contacts for Bing and other vintage material, records, sheet-music, books &c for sale or swap. Useful USA contact.

Bing ties with the 'silhouette' motif are available in dark blue or maroon, price £2.80 post paid from THE BADGE CENTRE, 45 Ropergate, Pontefract, West Yorks - they look smart with most suits/blazers.

Car-stickers 3" circular in rich blue and gold proclaiming ICC with Bing's motif available from BARRY THECKSTON, 13 Cunliffe Aven., Ramsbottom, Lancs - 60p each or two for £1. Just send remittance with SAE.

R.S.(Bob) JONES, 39 Gladstone Str., Hebburn, Tyne & Wear NE31 2XD is always interested in Bing records for disposal, 78s included; and all Crosbyana including books, tapes.

* THE LP-OGRAPHY OF BING CROSBY, listing more than 1000 albums featuring Bing, price £2.00 AND
* PHILCO RADIO TIMES (full details of radio programmes by Bing for this company) by LIONEL PAIRPOINT, £2.50 and
* THE ABC OF BING (an analysis of varying 'takes' of Crosby records) by COLIN PUGH, £2.50
* these three items available from REG BRISTO at prices stated, post paid.

MRS. RENEE CHESTER, 48 Milton Rd., Hanwell, London, W7 has virtually all Bing's films on video - and is prepared to help others. Send SAE for further information and lists on the VHS format. She has other items on VHS video also.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR OVERSEAS MEMBERS: BING-JUST FOR THE RECORD, see above necessarily has varying rates for posting abroad. European £4.00 post paid; US/Canadian £4.00 surface mail, £6.00 airmail. ALL REMITTANCE FOR THIS BOOK, INCLUDING home members, must be made payable to JOHN JOYCE, ICC ACCOUNT. AND STERLING ONLY !

Member FRANK BURTON, of 459 Bath Rd., Saltford, Bristol, Avon has produced a really splendid publication of 35 pages, photo-stat'd of the Gary Crosby serialisation AND associated press/magazine comments and articles, large pages (same size as BING pages) complete with many pictures. It really is something to have short of buying the expensive book.

AND FRANK MERELY WANTS TO PAY POSTAGE AND COSTS: HENCE IT CAN BE HAD FOR JUST 40p A COPY !
WE THOROUGHLY COMMEND FRANK FOR HIS INITIATIVE. 40P IS AN 'AWKWARD' SUM FOR CHEQUE OR PO BUT FRANK INSISTS, NO PROFIT ONLY POSTAGE/COSTS TO MEET! I IMAGINE HE WILL GET A FAIR RESPONSE - AND HAVE WARNED HIM THUS !

IT IS OUR OPINION MEMBERS WOULD GLADY PAY £1.00 for it !

Regret all special-purchase copies of THE CROSBY YEARS by Ken Barnes are now gone. There is, however, a version of the book in its draft, corrected form, i.e. errors are marked and corrections written in. It makes an interesting, possibly historic, item of Crosbyana should anyone care to make an offer. To the Editor please.

FERNANDO CALDAS, PO BOX 07-0477 Brasilia, DF., BRAZIL: Is ready to exchange Bing records pressed in Brazil (nothing special except to collectors of foreign labels) both 78s and LPs; special edition Bing LPs, and dance-bands of late 20's/early 30's. Correspondence welcomed.

Area secretaries and organisers are warmly invited to publicise their activities here.

IT IS OF TREMENDOUS ASSISTANCE IF MEMBERS REMIT THEIR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WHEN THE "X" REMINDER APPEARS ON PAGE 3., A DEGREE OF PLANNING IS NECESSARY FOR THE NUMBER OF COPIES REQUIRED FOR THE NEXT ISSUE.

BOOKS! BOOKS! BOOKS! - how they come! Many members have told us of the laugh they had when, reading Dorothy Lamour's book THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROAD she said: "In 1943 Paramount asked me to make a film with Bing called DIXIE because Bing was slipping at the box-office and needed another big name in the film to help it to be a money-maker...." Well, well! This at a time when Bing was No. 1 at the box-office! Dottie should emulate Bing and try a little modesty. The luck was certainly hers to be in DIXIE, but there it is - we must be tolerant of show-business egoes! Though its something to think about that the only autobiography which didn't have its share was - Mr. Crosby's! His success was all luck and a complete mystery to him - except that his mother prayed for him! Truly one on his own.

Much pleasanter was it to discover that James Herriott, the writer of those delightful 'vet' books, subsequently made into an even more delightful television series (ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL) is clearly a devoted Crosby admirer. This emerged when Mr. Herriott appeared in a record-selection radio programme (probably DESERT ISLAND DISCS) and referred most warmly to Bing. And he recounted the incident on the radio about his young (then) daughter Rosie. CHAS. WILKINSON of Belfast was able to fill us in about this particular book which is entitled THE LORD GOD MAKE THEM ALL. And quotes from it read:

(Continued overleaf ----------P.46

ANSWERS TO CROSBY QUIZ SEE PAGE 38: TURN PAGE UP !

1. (a) East Side of Heaven (b) Still the bluebird sings (c) Sweet is the word for you (d) Goodnight, sweetheart.
2. Bing (with Al Rinker duetting) made his first recording for his Biltmore Hotel Orch (I'VE GOT THE GIRL) 18th oct. 1926
3. Well, look now!
4. They all accompanied Bing on commercial recordings on organ; we could have included Ethel Smith but that would have made it much easier than it already is. Bing also sang to an organ on other rec rdings - the hymns, for example.
5. Bill Justis, his orchestra and chorus.
6. Man on Fire/Seven Nights a week; and the songs from ROBIN & THE SEVEN HOODS, i.e. Don't be a do-badder (two versions), Style, and Mister-Booze.
7. His orchestra provided the music on Bing's LAST recordings, i.e. a broadcast later issued as a commercial recording (BBC Records) The final Chapter.
8. HOW are things in Cloca Morra? - can you buy Killarney? - deep is the ocean? - come you do me like you do? - Green was my valley? - how high the moon? - it lies, itlies, it lies? - has this been going on? - long will it last? - about you? - lovely is Christmas? - soon? - Lucky can you get? -
9. Reprise - R-6106
10. Weikiki Wedding; Road to Singapore; Road to Morocco.
11. Top o' the Morning.
12. Dixieland round the world.
13. HEY JUDE; HEY BING; and BING 'N BASIE.
14. Re with Buddy Cole appeared on the MFP album merely called BING CROSBY (there the Blue of the Night..); the other on A SOUTHERN MEMOIR with Paul Smith directing the music.
15. Jimmy Dowen orchestra and chorus.

Easy? Difficult? Impossible? Informative? Entertaining? Well, we hope you got something out of it.

(Cont. from middle of preceding page...)

"'I let my heart fall into careless hands...' Little Rosie's voice piped in my ear as I guided my car over a stretch of rutted road. I had singing now to cheer the hours of driving!"

Then later; Herriott described how he and his wife settled on a new Murphy radiogram - 'cost over £90, a lot of money in 1950'. The children were to be kept away from the new Murphy set. He came in the next day and three-year-old Rosie was playing Bing's GHOST RIDERS IN THE SKY - on the Murphy! With her 'chubby little hands' Rosie was manipulating the radiogram. I had an hour to spare and Rosie gave me a recital. We went through Uncle Mac's Nursery Rhymes, etc., and many of the immortal Bing, to whom I was, and am, devoted. I was intrigued to find her favourite Crosby record was not PLEASE, or HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN? or his other classics, but CARELESS HANDS. This one had something special for her....'

It can easily be calculated that 'little Rosie' of the chubby and careless hands is now around thirty-six or seven. We only hope she has retained her interest in Mr. Crosby. It would be nice to contact her - and Mr. Herriott.

There is no doubt that many children are being inculcated into the ways of Crosbyana. Indeed, one of the many fascinating remarks I picked up at the Waldorf was: "...some kids are brought up on rusks. I was brought up on Bing records...." Hmmm...never thought of tasting them!

I have to go no further than my own grandson, just reached five. When he was around three he unerringly picked out Crosby albums and indeed, I had no qualms a year later (when he was four) in allowing him to handle even the most precious records. He was meticulous in holding them only on the edges between flattened palms - as he had been shewn!

He loves BLUE OF THE NIGHT, mainly I suspect, for the whistling. But he came home from school one day saying they had learned a new song for their concert - PUFF THE MAGIC DRAGON. I pulled out the album and put the track on. It was a treat to see his eyes widen in delight and possibly disbelief! Same thing happened with TEDDY BEAR'S PICNIC. Yet again, he had a REALLY NEW one - GRANDFATHER'S CLOCK. So again, I pulled out the singalong version by Bing. Which prompted my daughter (his mother, of course) to ask the eternal question: "My goodness, is there anything Bing did NOT sing?"

But what really puzzles me is the fact that, despite all the child-directed songs of Bing he loves, his way out favourite is - you'll never guess - BLUE PRELUDE !

To hear his piping little voice singing:

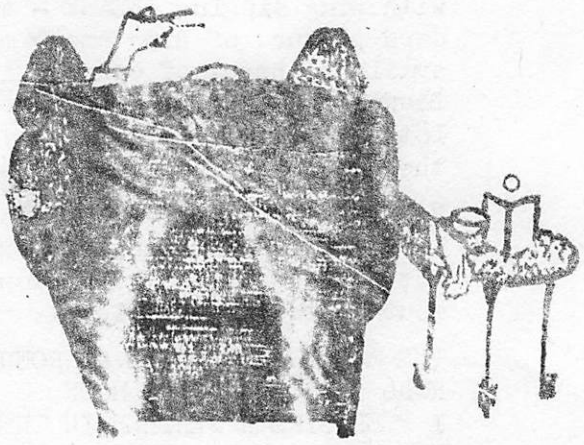
"Here I go, now you know why I'm leaving -
Got the blues, what can I lose...
Goodbye..."

is an odd though delightful experience. "Where are you going, then, Peter?"

"I'm not going anywhere grampa - I just like the song..." There's hope for the future!

BING track EVENTS

by
BERT BISHOP
&
The Editor



Non-events, alas, would be a better description this time! After the heady excitement, indeed, the exhilaration of a brand-new, unduplicating, BING SINGS BROADWAY from MCA last quarter, there is little to report. The cupboard is not completely bare but what there is will have no-one jumping up and down in fevered anticipation. No doubt the computer at MCA hasn't yet clicked out the answer as to whether or not to issue more Crosby albums. Many members, happily, did write to both Chris Ellis and MCA thanking them for this highly acceptable album - but I must confess Chris painted a not very inspiring picture of the scarce (and unknowing) staff at MCA. We can only wait and see - and meanwhile of course continue to enjoy BROADWAY and the bounteous legacy Bing has left us in so many albums.

To what there is: Decca, in its RECOLLECTION SERIES, has issued a double-album, THEY PLAYED THE PALLADIUM! (RFLD30 - price £4.99p). The title is a legitimate tag for all the artists featured did indeed play the Palladium though when you consider the Bing content is just one track NOW THAT YOU'RE GONE, recorded in 1931 (and so far as we know, Bing never sang it afterwards!) and played that famous theatre just 45 years later, the connection while sound must be tenuous! Nevertheless, tho' this song has appeared on Early Thirties albums it is NOT easily obtainable today. You must, therefore, consider whether that track plus artists like Louis Armstrong, Tessie O'Shea, Norman Wisdowm, Max Bygraves, Maurice Chevalier, and four prominent British dance bands of the 30's, Flanagan & Allen &c. is worth the price.

There are two 10-album sets, nicely and strongly packaged, emanating from MUSIC DISTRIBUTOR, Wendenstr. 25, 2000 Hamburg 1, German7. No Bing on the one set, but on the other THE JAZZIN' BING CROSBY complete album appears. The more assiduous will instantly perceive that this album appeared as a solitary album on the German-origin Historia label, H-622 some years back. The whole two 10-album packageis called JAZZ HISTORY. See page 113 of the LP-OGRAPHY for titles on HISTORIA H-622 - price of the two sets is £15 each. Not attractive, of course, unless you are also a dedicated jazz fan.

Another non-event is THREE LITTLE WORDS, the fairly obscure Rhythm Boys 'vocal refrain' contained in a French issue by RCA 741 045 on an album called THE WORKS OF DUKE.

RUNNIN' WILD is a 'Living Era' AJA5017 album containing MAKIN' WHOOPEE! (1928 - Whiteman), cost £4.99. No....not all that desirable.

Two other albums I have a feeling we have remarked here before - FILM STAR PARADE, againa 'Living Era' album (these are home-produced) with Bing singing PLEASE - and the sleeve has the Park Drive giarette-card picture of Bing among many others. SAND IN MY SHOES MCA MCL1689 available here, of course, is an album of 20 Classic Tracks of Connee Boswell among which are the two celebrated duets with Bing, e.g. BETWEEN 18th & 19th ON CHESTNUT ST., and YES, INDEED! But we can only repeat, these bits & pieces are for the purists who want to list everything.

Now we call in our other Disc Consultant, the erudite (equally erudite!) LIONEL PAIRPOINT who says, while scratching thro' my shabby notes I noticed some items which would provide an LP to provoke considerable mouth-watering - at least, among the 30's buffs:

THE MUSIC GOES ROUND & AROUND
ROLL ALONG, PRAIRIE MOON
I FEEL LIKE A FEATHER IN THE BREEZE
DINNER FOR ONE, PLEASE JAMES.
SADDLE YOUR BLUES TO A WILD MUSTANG
GOODY, GOODY,
EVERYTHING'S IN RHYTHM WITH MY HEART
BOO-HOO
CHERRY BLOSSOM LANE
SERENADE IN THE NIGHT
ALL MY EGGS IN ONE BASKET.
THE GLORY OF LOVE
YOUCAN'T PULL THE WOOL OVER MY EYES
ON THE BEACH AT BALI BALI
UNTIL THE REAL THING COMES ALONG
I'M IN A DANCING MOOD
ITS D'LOVELY
THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE AIR
LITTLE OLD LADY
THE MERRY-GO-ROUND BROKE DOWN

Yes, Bing sang 'em all and I haven't got even a bad copy of one of them! And you can look in BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD (see TRADING POST) in vain for he sang them all on KMH! SadisticLionel. But computer or not, we maintain that for every song Bing recorded commercially, there were probably 20 he sang on the radio. ITs a numbing thought we can hear only a fraction of them.

WHILE SO MANY WERE CONVERGING ON LONDON TO MARK BING'S 80TH BIRTH DATE GEORGE HARWOOD AND HIS WIFE MARY, were the latest of our members to take the path - the flight-path! - to America to attend THEIR marking of the date. From George's detailed account it was quite a trip and, as now know is always the case, they were royally received by our colleagues in Spokane, Washington and San Francisco. George and Mary visited all the important places of Crosbyana as well as attending the function. As it turned out, this year they were our sole representatives. They met the kind lady who, as we reported, regularly tends Bing's grave as a labour of love. They met Bing's sister, Mary Rose and were particularly impressed by Don Eagle whose outfit provides the 'live' music at Crosby functions over there.

They saw Bing's birthplace - which BCHS is hoping to purchase in due course - the church where Bing received his baptismal certificate; the Crosby Library at Gonzage, including the famous bronze statue. This all in addition to wrestling with freeway traffic in a hired car!

GEO., of course, lives in Hemingford Grey, Cambridge and is a regular attender at Leeds. He tells us he would certainly have been at the Waldorf had not protracted arrangements for his US visit necessarily having been made well in advance.

While it has percolated through that the event held in Newcastle on May 7th, parallel to the Waldorf Hotel function was successful and resulted in a most enjoyable evening the promised detailed report has not, alas, come to hand. (See page 28 of March BING)

BOY WHOSE MOTHER CALLED HIM HARRY

In Tacoma, Washington, on May 3, 1903, the first cries of a baby were heard. To that young mother, the sound of her newly-born son's voice must have been the loveliest she could wish to hear. In later years, the sound of his voice was the loveliest that many millions of people wished to hear. It still is!

On October 18, 1926, his voice was recorded for the first time. He made gramophone records every year for the next 51 years. Surely a record!

Doubtless, the voice that has been committed to shellac, vinyl and tape, will soon be heard on the CD format.

Year after year, the Gallup Poll revealed that he was the most popular singer. For virtually 20 years in America, his radio show was top. Remember that the competition was stiff, for Hope, Haymes, Sinatra and many more great entertainers had radio shows.

His films were consistently in the top ten at the box-office for about 20 years. For ten of th se years they were never out of the top ten; for five consecutive years they were number one. He had a permanent place in the top ten record charts.

Despite his incredible achievements and phenomenal popularity, he remained the humblest of men, as many people have affirmed. I once heard him describe his life's work as "what loosely might be called my career". All he wanted on his tombstone was that he was an ordinary guy who could hold a tune. I believe his wish has been respected.

He enriched the lives of countless millions of people. He made - and makes - countless Christmasses White.

This month, the 80th anniversary of his birth, we have remembered with undying affection and deep gratitude the man who was the best-loved entertainer of all. On May 31, 1903, he had been christened Henry - his mother called him Harry - the rest of the world knew him simply as Bing.

I thank God for the gifts he was given, and for the fact that the expression of these gifts has been enshrined on film, radio show tapes and records. Somebody once said: "You could warm your hands on the sound of his voice."

I know of no truer or better description. Including the radio shows we have some 4000 songs to warm our hands on. What a legacy !

For the true Crosby fan the sound of that lovely voice is a personal "White Christmas". As long as Christmas lasts, Bing will always make it white.

Bing Crosby died in 1977. I don't have to believe it if I don't want to.

Charles Wilkinson,
8 Old Coach Lane,
Belfast, 9.

This letter, by our member, appeared in the BELFAST TELEGRAPH on Tuesday, May 17 last; as soon as we saw it we cancelled or postoned what was scheduled for this just has to appear here. I'm sure members will agree. It is a beautifully constructed letter, encapsulating the essence of Bing Crosby as well as a fine counter-blast to the nauseous garbage so eagerly snapped up by some newspapers.

We may also talk of "hiding one's light under a bushel"! - for Chas., apart from the odd line, has never written for BING in that fashion! Congratulations to him - well done!

So much CAN be done on these lines.

FASCINATING FACETS: In the way that DICK NETTLETON once set out to put on tape all the song lyrics that mentioned Bing, we now have a considerable bibliophile in THEO HARRIS, 70 Dollis Hill Avenue, London, NW2 6QT. He has sent us some listing of books which mention Mr. C. Of course, one expects any book on jazz, popular music &c. to prominently feature Bing; but those that turn up in unexpected books, e.g. JAMES HERRIOTT's mentioned in this issue, are of particular interest.

Here, however, especially for newer/younger members are some fascinating facets. It may be said that RUDY VALLEE actually preceded Bing in the 'crooning' stakes; in his book of 1975 LET THE CHIPS FALL, Rudy wrote how he was to provide the music at a party in Baltimore. During the evening Whiteman's Rhythm Boys arrived to perform the cabaret. Then Rudy recalled:

> "In those days there was no sound amplification. Above the chatter of the diners the Rhythm Boys might just as well have stayed in bed; no one was paying the slightest attention to them.
> But suddenly a hush fell upon this crowd of Baltimore elite. One of the Rhythm Boys was singing a song called MONTMARTRE ROSE and even though he lacked any amplification or means of channeling the sound waves to us, his voice commanded instant silence. Whether he sang one or two choruses I don't recall, but when he finished the crowd applauded wildly and cried for more.
> As though he were oblivious to their shouts and applause, almost as though he was hard of hearing, he threaded his way back through the tables and passed by our sax section, not more than a foot and a half away from me. I was struck by the lack of expression on his face, which was a mask of complete indifference. Bing Crosby was a hit and didn't even know it"

That Baltimore 'society' audience had a unique preview of what was to come; and to their credit, they recognised true class and style! That was in 1927 for Rudy further recalled that in 1931 he met a songwriter, Con Conrad, who later introduced Russ Columbo to him. While Columbo was away from them, Conrad confided to Vallee:

> "..that when they had come east by train they had brought with them in their compartment a portable phonograph (gramophone) which worked by cranking it and all the Crosby records they could find. During the entire three-and-a-half day trip they played these records over and over again so that Columbo could get every trick and nuance of the Crosby delivery...."

Revealing? For those who have never heard of Russ Columbo, he was being built up as a rival to Bing in the early 30's - which, pleasant as his voice was he never could be - but he was killed in a most unusual accident in 1934. An ancient pistol he was examining fired when he innocently pulled the trigger. No-one even dreamed the pistol was capable of firing. It was a terrible tragedy. Bing was friendly with Russ and - as usual - always spoke well of him. He was a dark, Italian-looking man, quite handsome. But apart from his softer, less interesting, voice he was not in the same streettas Bing as regards personality, quickness of wit, the bon mot, etc. etc. - as Al Rinker put it. But Rudy Vallee's story illustrates his earnest desire to endeavour to emulate Bing. An impossible task. It was Rudy himself who wrote: "I heard this voice booming out of loudspeakers singing I FOUND A MILLION DOLLAR BABY - and I knew my day at the top was finished."

Perhaps these snippets can help to convey to younger members the quite phenomenal impact the emergence of Bing though, having said that, unless one experienced it, it is virtually impossible to convey it now. But, it helps!

With you again in September.

EARLY WARNING ! Leeds event this year is first Sunday in Oct. i.e. 2nd. MICHAEL CRAMPTON is the name to book with: 19 Carrholm Crescent, Chapel Allerton, Leeds, W. Yorks. Phone: 0532-689556. More next issue !